



# HOLIDAY IDLESSE



AND OTHER  
POEMS



John H. Ward

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“O'er the wave, through long watery alleys of trees,  
Under thick-hanging mosses soft-swinged by the breeze.”

*—Frontispiece.*

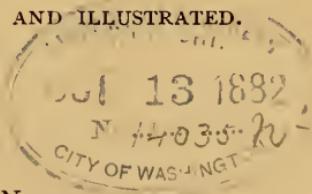
*—Page 140.*

# HOLIDAY IDLESSE,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY JAMES H. WEST.

NEW EDITION, ENLARGED AND ILLUSTRATED.



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1882.

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BY JAMES H. WEST.

DEDICATION.

TO HER whose sympathetic heart  
Hath been my stay ;  
Whose gentle hand hath guided me  
In all my way ;  
Whose teachings in my childhood's hours  
Were love alone ;  
Whose arms of counsel, now in youth,  
Are round me thrown ;  
To her whose bright example is  
My guiding star ;  
Whose love and faith are firmer than  
The hills afar ;  
Whose presence hovers o'er me like  
Some holy dove ;  
TO HER these little songs are given,  
In grateful love.

NOTE TO THE EDITION OF 1880.

[ALL of the verses here printed, with one or two exceptions, have before been in type. Some of them have been copied extensively,—at times coming back to me from far wanderings. They have oftentimes made me warm friends, and this at least I have, as a reward for the hours devoted to them. They all have been written at random moments, in the intervals of busy youthful years. I ask not, however, on this account, favor for them: they are printed for what they are worth. Their reception in the past leads me to believe them not unworthy their present form.]

NOTE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE very cordial reception extended to the first edition of these poems, published nearly two years ago, has led to this second issue, the present edition being much enlarged.

The current volume contains almost all of the shorter poems for which the author desires to be held responsible. Such others of his verses as are fugitives in the land, wandering about in the columns of local newspapers, nameless and unaccredited, he hardly regrets to disown: although it is true that whenever he meets them, altered in dress very often, and changed in feature still as his children he would fain take them in his arms.

It may be only just to himself to say that many of the pieces here printed were written when the author was not twenty years old, the remainder having appeared during the four or five years since intervening.

Next preceding the Table of Contents are printed five lines,—"The Poet's Forethought,"—which were prefixed to the volume of 1880. Following the Epilogue, "Finished," at the close of the present edition, will be found ten companion lines,—"The Poet's Afterthought,"—inspired by the warmth of the reception accorded to the first volume, and first printed with "Kalligo," on the original publication of that poem in 1881.

To his friends, near and far, the author would extend his cordial greeting, and his thanks for their continued kindly encouragements. And for himself, in publishing this little volume anew, he desires no happier return than the fuller fruition of his aspiration as contained in the closing lines of his Proem and of his Epilogue.

J. H. W.

COLLEGE HILL, Mass., 1882.

LINES.

THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT.

I TOOK within my hand  
The clay and potter's wheel:  
Who knows?...the model I have planned  
To marble may anneal,—  
Or crumble into sand.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

"O'er the wave, through long watery alleys of trees,  
Under thick-hanging mosses soft-swinged by the breeze."  
—*Frontispiece*.

"Full many a placid hour  
    Beside thy edge I've strayed,  
And many a sylvan bower  
    Has Fancy there displayed."  
—*Page 38.*

"The hut, like the owner, was tottering fast."  
—*Page 126.*

P R E L U D E.

O FRIENDS of mine! whose kindly words  
have led  
Unto the gathering of these wayside  
flowers,—  
These wilding blossoms of my happier  
hours!.....  
As one who, walking in a garden bed,  
Turns wearily from poppies fiery red,  
Wanders from where the flaming peony  
towers,  
Passes the odorous pinks, the kalmia  
bowers,  
And through the gateway strolls, that  
he may tread  
The quiet forest-path, and feel the kiss  
Of cooling breezes, and behold alone  
The modest violet's blue, and clover  
mild,—  
So you, ye say, would wander! But the  
bliss.....  
The bliss ye seek! Dreaming fair seed  
were sown,  
What if ye here find weeds,—weeds  
only,—tangled, wild!

PROEM.

O, STRANGE are the songs that the wild birds sing,  
And weird the refrain when the zephyrs of Spring  
First rustle through branches new burdened with  
green;

O, quaint is the forest's dim silence and shade,  
And wild the loud Ocean's entombed cannonade  
'Neath perilous cliffs and mad gorges between:

But stranger and quainter, more weird and more  
wild,

Are the Songs which the listening Bards have be-  
guiled,

In mystical cadences sung in their ear!  
For them chant the birds a more marvelous strain,  
For them beats the tempest a wilder refrain,  
Than others than they are enabled to hear!

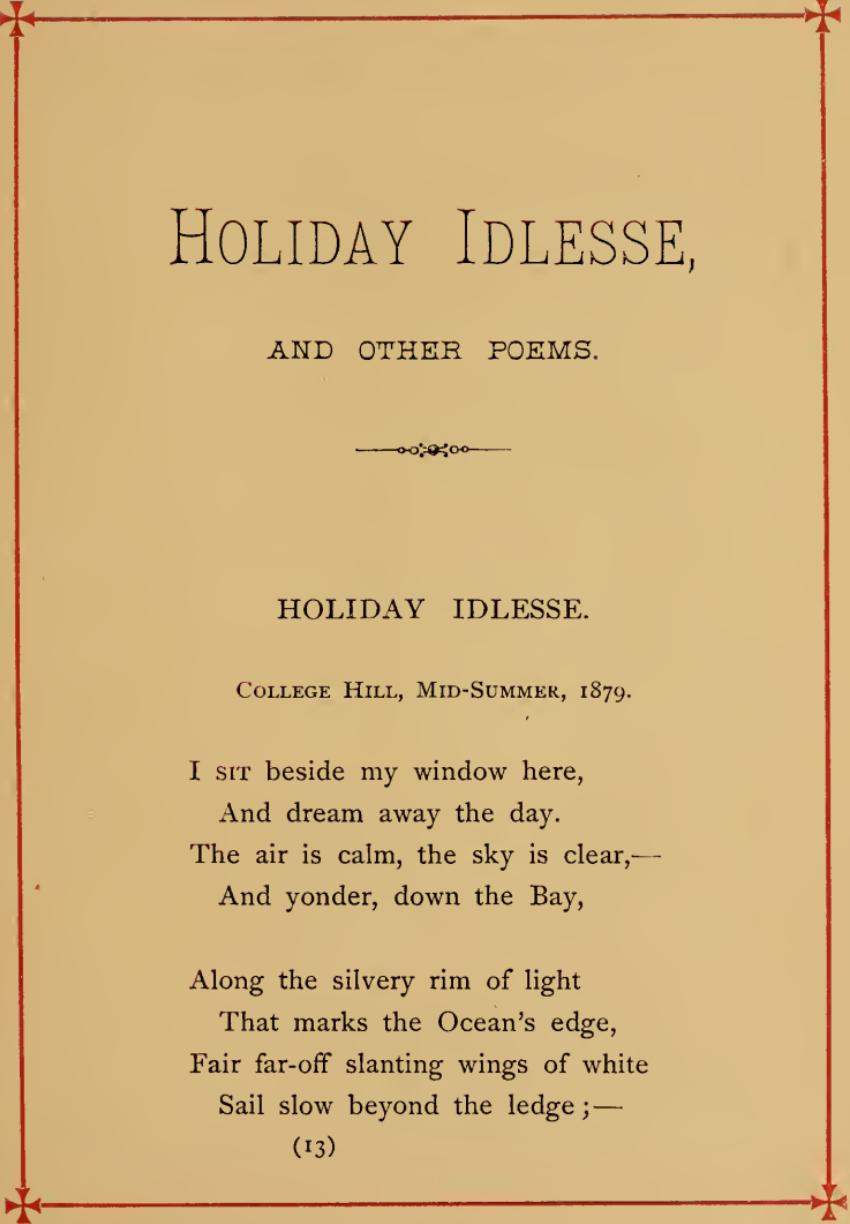
Thus down through the ages come mystical rhymes,  
Which Minstrels have rung on their harps betimes,  
Enchanting men's lives with their symphonies  
sweet;

Thus down through the Future shall Troubadours  
sing,  
And sweet Serenaders their melodies bring,  
Till earth be with marvelous anthems replete.

Perchance the weird Minstrel may soon be forgot;  
His birth and his grave be rememberèd not,  
Nor aught but his Muse keep his memory green:  
But vernal forever, till centuries die,  
Shall ring out his Songs to the verberant sky,  
Like musical chimes from a belfry unseen!.....

Nor mine may it be to attain to a niche  
In temples whose walls the more favored en-  
rich,—  
Whose songs, though as fervent, are feeble to  
theirs:  
But happy indeed were my heart and my pen,  
Perchance if some brief benediction to men  
My verse might contain in its lines unawares!





# HOLIDAY IDLESSE,

AND OTHER POEMS.

---

## HOLIDAY IDLESSE.

COLLEGE HILL, MID-SUMMER, 1879.

I sit beside my window here,  
And dream away the day.  
The air is calm, the sky is clear,—  
And yonder, down the Bay,

Along the silvery rim of light  
That marks the Ocean's edge,  
Fair far-off slanting wings of white  
Sail slow beyond the ledge ;—

Beyond the ledge of towering rocks  
That mark the heights of Lynn ;—  
Beyond to where the Equinox  
Shall howl with awful din.

O stay at home, ye stately ships !  
O stay at home as I !  
Nor sail to meet but sure eclipse  
Beneath an angry sky !

The wandering thought, the impatient heart,  
The discontented soul,  
At best can know of life but part,  
And not the rounded whole.

But ah ! ye cannot stay !—e'en now  
Your sails are seaward set :  
E'en now above your burdened bow  
The fluttering sea-gulls fret.

And soon I too must hence away,  
To skirt uncharted shores !  
Already in my ears the spray  
Of ocean conflict roars.

'T is well ! 't is well, ye stately ships !  
Ye were not made for calm !  
Your keels were laid to bear to lips  
That hunger, Eastern balm.

'T is well no port of listless peace  
Enshields your slothful sail :  
The ship that gains the Golden Fleece  
Must dare the Euxine gale.

'T is well, O heart, no life of ease  
Before thee opens fair !  
That perfect life would fail to please  
Which breathed but softer air.

'T is not when zephyrs kindly blow,  
And calmly, sweetly steal ;  
When waters musically flow,  
And laugh along the keel ;

'T is in the dashing of life's wave,  
And in the sudden shock ;  
'T is when the soul, though stout and brave,  
Is ground as on the rock,

That life's objective port is neared,  
Its noblest courses run,  
And souls of men the straightest steered  
To lands beyond the sun.

---

## M A N.

## A PHANTASY?

## I.

He does not think—he does not know:  
A wave is breaking on the shore;  
A wave surcharged with richest ore,  
And tinged with deepest golden glow.

He heeds it not—he does not know:  
It scatters pearls athwart his path;  
It bathes as in a purple bath  
The boundaries where his feet must go.

He heeds it not—he passes by  
It breaks, it bursts upon the strand,  
Its wealth is squandered on the sand,  
Its pearls in shattered fragments fly.

II.

He does not know—he does not guess  
A flower is blossoming at his feet;  
A flower is offering incense sweet—  
And fading in the wilderness.

He heeds it not—he passes on:  
Its purple petals droop and die;  
Its wealth is wasted on the sky:  
It might have bloomed by Helicon.

III.

He does not know—he does not dream:  
A star is gleaming in the sky;  
A star that passeth swiftly by!  
A star that flames alone for him.

He sees nor feels its cheering light:  
It glows and gleams indeed, to-day;—  
To-morrow, deepening into gray,  
Shall find it vanished in the Night.

## IV.

He does not dream—he does not think:  
A fountain gushes at his hand;  
Its wealth he does not understand:  
He looks nor moves, nor stoops to drink.

## V.

He does not think—he does not know:  
A song is trembling through the air;  
A bird is warbling anthems rare,  
And murmuring lyrics sweet and low.

He hears nor heeds—he passes on.  
And wings are raised—a birdling flies;  
The trembling cadence fails and dies:  
The anthem and the bird are gone.

## VI.

He does not know—he does not dream :  
A wave, a flower, a star, a song,  
A fountain—all to him belong,  
And all exist alone for him.

---

## SUNSET.

FROM COLLEGE HILL, OVERLOOKING THE MYSTIC.

THE day is done :  
The imperial Sun  
Is sinking, now his course is run,  
Behind the hills of Arlington.

Through purple mist  
I view the tryst  
The sunbeams keep with the clouds they kissed  
While descending the vale of amethyst.

Through amber haze  
I view the blaze  
Forth-streaming in red level rays  
Over hill-side paths and forest ways.

As Moses' rod,  
Through Moses' God,  
Was lifted where the Israelites trod,  
Ere yet through the waves they rode dry shod,—

So the Sun's last blaze,  
These Autumn days,  
Its rod of lurid enchantment lays  
Where the Mystic's crimson current plays!

And as Moses' word  
The Red Sea heard,  
So here, since its waves the sunset blurred,  
The hurrying current has not stirred!

A shadowy line  
Across the brine  
Is flung from the bank where a giant pine  
Beside the river doth low incline.

This,—this, in my dream,  
The place doth seem  
Where the God of the Jews, by Arabia's stream,  
The Egyptian bondsmen did redeem !

The Sun sinks low :  
Weird breezes blow ;  
And over the river, or fast or slow,  
Gaunt hurrying shadows come and go.

'T is the host—the host  
That did lately boast  
Of the power of God and the Holy Ghost !—  
Now shivering here on the Red-Sea coast !

But the Sun goes down,—  
And the shadows brown  
Grow black and ominous under the frown  
Of mists that fall in the waves and drown.

These,—these are the ranks  
That on Nilus' banks  
Afflicted the Jews without respite or thanks !  
Ev'n now how the slave-drivers' harness clanks !—

For a sullen roar,  
As of chains on a floor,  
Comes up from where pebbles roll o'er and o'er,  
As the ripples rush sobbing against the shore.

But a wind sweeps down,  
Like Jehovah's frown !  
And the billows go hurrying tow'rds the town,—  
And Pharaoh's hosts in the whirlpool drown !

And now in the sky,  
Serene and high,  
Floats the shield of Omnipotence tranquilly ;  
And the “pillar of fire by night” is nigh ! . . . .

—O heart ! like the Jews,  
To be led ye choose  
From a land where Doubts and Fears abuse,  
To a land where Faith all Fear subdues !

The prizes are mean  
That intervene :  
Be sundered ! divided ! O vapory screen !  
And give us to walk unscathed between.

“WHITHER, YE STATELY SHIPS!”

FROM WINTHROP HEAD.

WHITHER, ye stately Ships,  
In grandeur do ye ride?—  
Oh! do ye never tremble, dreading dire eclipse,  
As silently ye glide  
Athwart the Ocean’s lips?

Far o’er the widening seas  
Ye sail to beauteous lands,—  
Alike, ’mid Behring’s ice and Sunda’s odorous ease,  
Obedient to the hands  
Which bend you to the breeze.

Proudly your course ye take  
Where ne’er before went keel;  
Or follow in the track where thirsty myriads slake  
The intense Desire they feel  
For far-off loved-ones’ sake!

Gibraltar's frowning rocks  
May shadow you in gloom ;  
But when ye have outridden the vengeful Equinox,  
Ye find deep harbor-room  
Where ne'er come tempest-shocks.

Outward indeed, ye fly,  
And farthest oceans trace ;  
But if ye once shall gain the sought Sicilian sky,  
Homeward ye then may race  
In gladdest ecstasy !

Never a cargo bear  
Of shame or crime, O ships !  
Better that whirlwind rend, or treacherous waves  
insnare,  
Than that Contagion's lips  
Should taint your Heaven-free air !

But far as oceans stretch,  
Or Austral's islands rise,  
Wing ye Love's message to the wild despairing  
wretch

Who, fainting, seeks the Prize  
He finds not lest ye fetch !

Scorched amid Central Zone,  
Crushed by Ar.tarctic ice,  
Ever, O stately ships! your nobler birthright own,  
Nor plunge, a sacrifice,  
With but a gurgling groan !

Back! bring our sons safe back!—  
Our brothers, lovers, friends!  
We had not let them sail with you your venturous  
track,  
But that our faith extends  
Beyond a drifting wrack !

Never betray, O ships,  
The trust reposed in ye!  
But firm as Boatman builds, and stanch as he  
equips,  
Sail ye an Argosy  
That meets nor dreads eclipse !

“A BREATH FROM THE FIELDS.”

[To \* \* \* \*, who sent me a box of spring blossoms, with these words: “Taking my usual walk after tea, last evening, I came to a place dotted with violets. Beginning to gather them, I thought of you in your city home. Deeming that a breath from the fields would brighten that home a little, I take the liberty to send you a few.”]

“A BREATH from the fields! ”....

Ah me!

Could I paint the vision I see!

For under the spell of these flowers

The avenue, busy and hot,

And the office, and work, are forgot;

And these granite and marble towers

Quick vanish away, and quick

The whole desert of fiery brick.

“A breath from the fields! ”....

All day

My spirit has languished to stray

From the City of Turmoil. And now,

On the magical carpet of Thought,

On the pinions these blossoms have brought,  
I am wandering where the bough  
Of the elm with the maple blends,  
And the song of the robin ascends !

"A breath from the fields!".....  
The sweets  
Of a myriad marguerites  
Are flooding with incense the air!  
And a dream my heart besets  
As I gaze on the violets—  
A dream and a splendor rare—  
Of a brook where the blood-root drinks,  
And the laughter of bobolinks.

"A breath from the fields!".....  
I catch  
A view of the leafy thatch  
That waves on the meadow's marge.  
I roam in the shadows of trees  
Like those in Hesperides!  
And I pluck from the branches the large  
White beautiful apple-sprays,  
Till the pain in my heart allays.

“A breath from the fields!”.....

Thank God

For the friend who kneeled on the sod

To gather such glory for me!

The blossoms will fade; but depart

Will they never from out of my heart.

There, forever, their beauty will be,  
Like the blossoms that gladden the eyes  
Of the dwellers in Paradise.

BOSTON, May 11, 1881.

—

### SWEETEST SONGS ARE NEVER SUNG.

#### I.

THE sweetest songs are never sung,—

So the Poets say.

The tenderest chords are never strung;

The merriest bells are never rung.



Well-a-day!

Well-a-day!

Let the Poets have their way!

Let them have their way!—

All that sighing Minstrels sing can never me  
dismay.

*I* can hear sweet bells go pealing—pealing joy-  
ously to-day!

*I* can hear their silvery pealing—hear their merry  
roundelay!

II.

THE fairest pearls are never found,—

So Professors say.

The cheeriest trumpets never sound;

The jauntiest vessels go aground.

Well-a-day!

Well-a-day!

Let Professors have their way!

Let them have their way!—

All that dull Professors dream can never me  
dismay!

*I* can see stanch ships go sailing—sailing ever proudly by!

*I* can see tall masts and rigging outlined grandly against the sky!

## III.

THE saintliest prayer is never said,—  
So the Preachers say.

The daintiest board is never spread;  
The loveliest maid is never wed.

Well-a-day!

Well-a-day!

Let the preachers have their way!

Let them have their way!—

All that dullard Parsons dream can never me  
dismay!

I myself perchance know somewhat of the lights  
along the shore:—

I myself am soon to wed that loveliest maiden  
they deplore!

## BEACON-LIGHTS.

## SONNET.

THE brilliant beacon-lights that bound the shore  
Guide safe the storm-tossed mariner to port:  
What matter, green or gold, or tall or short?  
What matter, shown from rock, or bluff, or tower?  
He questions not their color, size, or power,  
But heeds their warning with his every thought:  
He heeds their warning, and the ship is brought  
To home and harbor in a happy hour.—  
Along the headlands of Life's turbulent sea  
Aye gleam undimmed the guiding lights of Love!  
What matter, Jew, Greek, Christian, if the Light  
Be followed faithfully?—It then shall be  
A Guiding Light indeed, to Ports above:  
A pillar of cloud by day, of fire by night.

## THE YACHTSMAN'S PENNANT.

MOURNFUL I stand on the solitary shore,  
And feel the misty sea-fogs drifting in.—  
Above the wind-swept islands, o'er and o'er,  
The darkling clouds of atmospheric gloom  
From sight the vistas of the sea entomb,  
And curtain off the scene as though it had not  
been.

But suddenly, amid the thickening fog,—  
In yonder spot where deepest lies the gloom,  
And sea and air hold closest dialogue,—  
The drifting density a moment parts,  
And swift to earth heaven's gleaming sunshine  
darts,  
Revealing where the top-masts of a yachtsman  
loom.

Proudly her pennant to the breeze unfolds,  
And bids my eye to read the inscription there.

I look: and in the characters it holds  
There gleams the bright emblazoned title, HOPE!  
Methinks I here may trace the horoscope  
Of life! and gladsome Faith doth banish my de-  
spair.

---

### PENTECOST.

“Wohlauf! es ruft der Sonnenschein  
Hinaus in Gottes freie Welt!”

—TIECK: *Zuversicht*.

“ . . . . Pentecost, which brings  
The Spring.”—LONGFELLOW.

O SLUGGISH slumberer, awake!—  
The sunlight calls thee!  
Earth's sullen clods beneath thee quake;  
The promised buds of Springtide break;  
The green sedge quivers by the lake.  
No longer Winter's gloom appalls thee;—  
But out where birds and blossoms wake,  
God's sunlight calls thee!

The bobolink beside the brook  
Sings, never weary ;  
The sobbing pine, so long forsook,  
Is loud with caw of crow and rook ;  
And where the snow-hung elder shook,  
And sighed through all the Winter dreary,  
The robins, as in *Æsop's Book*,  
Chant loud and cheery.

Within the woodland green and wild,  
The fern is springing ;  
And near the maiden-hair so mild,  
And golden mosses high up-piled,  
The violet, Nature's favorite child,  
Its fragrance on the air is flinging.—  
How often hath its breath beguiled  
My heart to singing !

O weary soul ! beset by toil  
From dawn till gloaming !—  
Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, flee the broil !  
Forsake the city's ceaseless moil ;

Come out, and tread the tender soil  
Of Beulah, where no footstep, roaming,  
Fails of the priceless wine and oil  
Of Nature's foaming !

Pale students ! poring over books  
And musty Latin !—  
Shakespeare read sermons in the brooks !  
Through far Ionian seas and nooks  
Old Homer, godlike in his looks,  
Roved singing of earth's robe of satin !  
And Virgil's shepherds timed their crooks  
To Nature's matin !

O aching feet ! enforced to tread  
Hot urban places !—  
That fain would wander, fain would wed  
The velvet of some mossy bed !  
Ye sometime, as the Prophet said,  
Shall rove the wide Eternal spaces !—  
Rove sometime with the happy dead,  
In heavenly places !

O sorrowing heart!—for her, for her,  
Who left thee weeping!  
Canst thou not deem this wondrous stir  
Of Springtide leaf and gossamer  
A mild angelic minister?—  
This wakefulness, where all was sleeping,  
Is it not Heaven's own messenger  
To stay thy weeping?

Shall not the clouds that roll afar  
On Life's horizon,  
Flee too, like Winter's broken bar?  
And in their stead a glittering star  
Arise, that Æons shall not mar?  
This is the hope our heart relies on;—  
And such shall be! when rolls ajar  
Heaven's fair horizon!



CONCORD RIVER.

My soul to-day,  
O River, wandering seaward,  
Is with thee!  
From out the gray  
Of Memory—hurrying leeward—  
Radiantly,  
As in a dream  
Of friends dead or at a distance,  
I behold  
Thy fair, faint gleam ;  
And for thy glad existence,—  
Gay with gold  
As where there waits  
Eternal sunrise Yonder  
At the gates  
Of sapphire,— I  
A grateful prayer do ponder,  
Tremblingly.

O strange, O mystic stream! —

Slow winding to the sea:

Oft in my nightly dream

Thy vision comes to me!

Within my slumber I behold thy placid wave,

And look with joy on thy majestic sweep;

And with the answering smile I crave

Thou smilest in my sleep!

Oft in my light-keeled boat,

Thy tremulous wave afloat,

Thy bosom me hath borne,

Thy strength my weakness known,

Till wearying care, and scorn,

And every fear, were flown;

Until, with spell most magical,

Thou in my bosom quelled

All phantoms tragical,

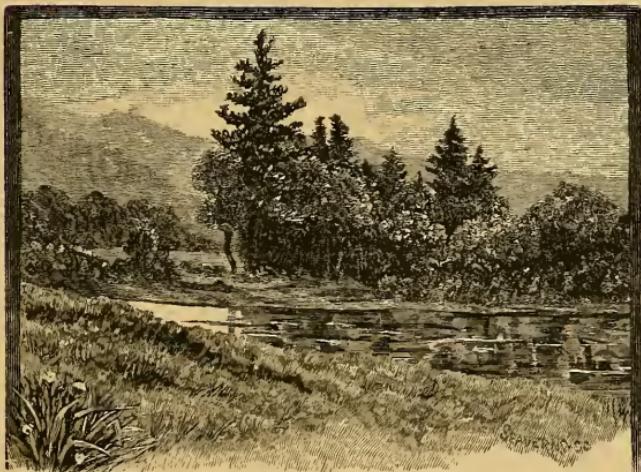
And pain and doubt dispelled,

As when a cloud upon thy breast removes,

And down the sun shines on the sea it loves.

Full many a placid hour

Beside thy edge I've strayed,



“ Full many a placid hour  
Beside thy edge I’ve strayed,  
And many a sylvan bower  
Has Fancy there displayed.”

—*Page 38.*



And many a sylvan bower  
Has Fancy there displayed.

Below thy historic Battle-Bridge thou coursest  
through a plain,

There 'mid thy wide lone meadow-lands to turn  
and turn again :

But in thy narrower, wooded course, where trees  
thy waves o'erhang,

And where the verdure thickly lies as where the  
Sirens sang,—

Here many a leafy, shady dell  
My feet of yore have found,  
Nor deemed ye had a parallel  
The wide earth round.

Full oft beside thy vernal banks,  
What time might come Spring's jocund charioteer,  
Have I been mute observer of the thanks  
With which ye knew earth's natal glories near ;—  
Rippling in gratitude when ye should learn  
Had come the blushing violet and fern !  
Plashing thy emerald edge  
With joyous dew,

Ye kissed with welcome pledge  
Earth's offerings new.

And I have seen thy greeting to the stars,  
As one by one they flecked thy unruffled floor—  
    Venus, and red-browed Mars,  
    And countless myriads more,  
    Gleaming amid the eternal height,  
    The golden diadems of Night.  
And when unto her full might grow  
    The round red harvest moon,  
    The one above and one below  
    Made midnight like to noon :  
For mirrored wondrously within thy tide,  
    Graved by a Hand unseen thy bosom o'er,  
    Stood every fleck amid heaven's arches wide,  
    And every shade and shadow of the shore :  
Each crooked twig, each fluttering leaf, was there,  
    As truly represented as in air :  
And scarce the line the wave and land between,  
So perfect was the juncture, could by eye be seen.

Amid the verdant foliage at thy side,  
Unknown to all the world but thee and me,

A countless classic host have lived and died,  
And linger now not e'en in memory.  
My books indeed have taught  
Of many a classic scene and holy age;  
Yet to my soul with wisdom full as fraught  
Has been thy Springtime foliage!  
For I have looked through thee as through a portal,  
And met the wondrous gaze of the Immortal!

1878.

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THE MURMURING CITY AND THE  
ANSWERING OCEAN.

LEAVING the busy, brawling bustle,  
Leaving the heedless haste and hustle  
Of the never-silent city,  
Alone I sought the precincts peaceful of the roll-  
ing ocean,—  
Rolling, rolling, never ceasing.

Beating for me within the city,  
Beating with throbs of tender pity  
Was there scarce a single bosom ;  
But continuous and tender were the throbings of  
the ocean,—  
Throbbing, throbbing, never ceasing.

Tremblingly, “ ‘Tis the heart of Nature,’ ”  
Said I, “ answering to the stature  
Of the longing in my bosom  
For the highest, holiest manhood—for the noblest  
truest manhood ! —  
‘T is the tremulous heart of Nature.”

Truly, my soul ! — but more : — the rather,  
‘T was the tremulous heart of the Father !  
‘T was the sympathy of the Highest, —  
Of the Highest, Holiest, Truest, — of the Creator  
to the creature,  
In his aspirations Heavenward !

"A DEAR LITTLE BIRD."

A DEAR little bird, on a little low tree,  
Sat swinging and balancing merrily.

"O dear little bird, ere away you shall fly,  
Pray sing me your sweet little song!" said I.

With silvery voice, from his brave little throat,  
The bird made glad melody, note upon note.

"O dear little innocent birdie!" I cried,  
"I fain would invite you in faith to my side!"

Right instantly down, from the little low tree,  
The bird in all trustfulness flew to my knee.

"O dear little bird, with thy coronet red,  
Still nearer, and rest in my bosom!" I said.

Close up to my heart flew the dear little bird,—  
Nor ever once since from my presence has stirred.

O Truth! like the bird, from the midst of Life's  
tree,

Come fly to my heart and dwell likewise with me!

1877.

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#### MY DRAGON-FLY.

[One day during the Summer there flew in at my open window in Boston a huge dragon-fly. Without the slightest hesitation my winged visitant perched himself, very familiarly, upon my writing-table; and with quivering wings—four great gauzy webs of wings—sat for a moment silently though with glistening eye gazing steadfastly into my face. What had called the tiny messenger from the sweet fields and rippling water-courses of his native haunts, to the dust and aridity of city life, I could not determine. However, as he flew in at my window, I had just opened and was then reading a fraternal letter from a dear friend, dated at his summer-home at Vineyard Haven (Island of Martha's Vineyard), in which letter he play-

fully wished himself a humming-bird, a butterfly, or some other insect-angel, in order that he might fly to my office for an hour and "whisper in my ear" the delights of his rural and sea-side home! The coincidence of my friend's wish and the strange presence with me of the dragon-fly at the moment, amused me. And the above will sufficiently account for the supposititious *scene* of the Sonata with which my tiny visitant, during his brief stay, was pleased to favor me; for the following lines, although printed under my name, were in reality "whispered in my ear" by the dragon-fly, during his not unwelcome presence upon my writing-table that summer afternoon. When the sweet little soloist had finished, he again took wing, vanishing as he had come. I called after him, for I fain would have had him stay; but he did not answer. I have often wished him back; but as yet, he has not come.]

## SONATA OF THE DRAGON-FLY.

I COME, I come, from distant shores ;—  
From where the wide Atlantic roars  
    Around my island home ;  
Where pebbly strands unbroken lie,  
Ringed round with spray-cloud mystery,  
    Ringed round with silvery foam !

I come from where the trembling pine  
Chants chorus to the heaving brine,  
    Chants sonnets to the sea ;

From where the myriad-leavèd elm,  
On brink of wide Neptunian realm,  
Breathes soulful melody.

I come from meadowy retreats,  
Where violets and marguerites  
    The livelong day repose ;  
Where jauntily the golden-rod  
And tufted stalks of asters nod,  
    Mingled with sweet-brier rose.

I come from where the rippling brook  
Flows free through many a sylvan nook,  
    Then leaps into the sun ;  
Where ferns and grasses guard the brink  
Where butterflies descend to drink,  
    Their glad life just begun.

I come from where the oriole's nest  
Hangs hidden beyond the eager quest  
    Of hawk or schoolboy hand ;  
From where the yellow-bird's golden hue  
Flits by with a flash across the blue  
    Of the high arch overspanned.

I come from where at eventide  
The stars in majestic beauty glide,  
    Outvying Arabia's days ;  
Where nightly the fire-fly's delicate lamp  
Gleams bright on the background cold and  
    damp  
    Of the furry, tasselled maize.

I come from where no thirst of man  
Encircles the earth with rule and span,  
    Or measures the soul with a gauge :  
From where the rustic may worship God,  
And fear no threatening beck or nod  
    In childhood, youth, or age.

I come, I come, from distant shores ; —  
From where the wide Atlantic roars  
    Around my island home ;  
Where pebbly strands unbroken lie,  
Ringed round with spray-cloud mystery,  
    Ringed round with silvery foam !

## A FACE, AND A RACE.\*

I ONCE in a dream ran a race  
From College-Hill halls to Cremona.  
I once fell in love with a face,  
And dreamed it a love for the owner.

The pathway was pleasant and green :  
I dreamed it would never grow dreary.  
The face, like a beautiful scene,  
Illumined my heart when aweary.

But the road became wet—as by craft!  
With mud and with water it stained me.  
I told her my love—and she laughed!  
Nor cared she a whit how it pained me.

I awaked from my dreaming, alas !  
And never arrived at Cremona.  
And the beautiful face—let it pass !  
Let it fade from my heart, like the owner !

\* From an unprinted college romance.

## COLLEGE HILL.

[WRITTEN AFTER LONG ABSENCE.]

ONE thought to-day, and one alone,  
Has filled th' horizon of my mind :  
And fairer sunbeam never shone  
On eyes that long had wandered blind.  
My heart to-day, with happy thrill,  
Has been with thee, O College Hill !  
With thee, with thee,  
O College Hill !

The thunder of far Alpine Hills,  
The storm-cloud of the Southern Seas,  
The murmur of Spain's murmuring rills,—  
Of these I've dreamed—nor dreamed of  
ease.

But happiest thoughts my bosom fill  
Whene'er I turn, O College Hill,  
To thee, to thee,  
O College Hill !

The room grows wide wherein I sit:  
These narrow, city walls expand:  
I see again thy robin flit,  
I see thy lawns on every hand,—  
As green, as vocal, as the rill  
That danced adown the sacred hill  
Of Helicon,  
O College Hill!

I see thy rising slopes,—thy halls ;—  
O Mother-Earth ! thou’rt greener there!  
And gentler be the rain that falls,  
And sweeter, balmier be the air,  
Forever, and forever still,  
Upon thy breast, O College Hill !  
On thy loved breast,  
O College Hill !

Again I seem to see thy trees,—  
Thy silver-maple, mountain-ash ;  
And dearer to my heart are these  
Than Eastern vine or calabash !

I would not part with these, to till  
By fair Euphrates, College Hill!

Or Gihon's edge,  
O College Hill!

Again I see,—more blest than all,—  
Full many a dear, remembered face ;  
Again I hear the laugh, the call,  
The cheer that rang from place to place,—  
The laugh and cheer that echo still  
About thy halls, O College Hill,  
Could I but hear,  
O College Hill!

Again, in thought, I grasp the hand  
Of comrades north and southward gone ;—  
I follow them! and in the land  
Of Danube, Rhine and Amazon  
Again I feel the electric thrill  
I knew on thee, O College Hill,  
When hand clasped hand  
On College Hill!

O sacred slopes! where first my heart  
With wider hope for man was fired!  
Be ne'er forgot, though years depart,  
The Hope Eternal there inspired!  
And, dying, could my body fill  
A grave on thee, O College Hill,  
I'd die content,  
O College Hill!

---

OLD TIMOTHY JOHN, AND HIS FRE-  
QUENT REFRAIN,

“POTATOES! OH, POTATOES!”

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

Not all the heroes of the earth  
Have gained their victory with the sword:  
Not every child of noble birth  
Hath borne the escutcheon of a lord.

Full oft, perchance, by crumbling tomb,  
By darkling waters' whirling flow,  
May star-eyed asters beauteous bloom,  
And fragrant-everlasting grow !

---

OLD TIMOTHY JOHN was a marvelous man,  
And always a happy one, too, as he ran  
    In the rear of his load of potatoes.  
“Six dollars, and health, and a hand-cart ! ” said he ;  
“Oh, who in the city can wealthier be ! —  
    ‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’ ”

The hush of the morning was stirred by his voice,  
And ever till evening he offered a choice  
    Of several kinds of potatoes.  
“I warrant them sound as a drum ! ” cried John,  
Though this was a hollow comparison ! —  
    ‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’ ”

Nor ever a wife or a child had he ;  
Poor fellow ! no weight ever lay on his knee  
    But a bushel or so of potatoes.

His cart was his wife, and his child, and his friend ;  
“To a *family-carriage*,” said he, “I pretend!—  
‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

Full certainly Tim was a marvelous man,  
And quite a philosopher, too, as he ran  
    In the rear of his load of potatoes.  
“A pox o’ your logic!” cried moralist John :  
“Men soon would decease if they didn’t live on—  
    *Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*”

“An’ talk o’ your ‘Nature’ and ‘Physics’!” said Tim,  
While staring his audience looked at him  
    And then at his load of potatoes.  
“Ho, ho!” he said, shoving his cart in the pause,  
“Isn’t here an effect that’s ahead o’ the cause?—  
    *Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*”

Not much of a Christian, perhaps, was Tim ;  
But often his measure ran over the brim  
    As he sold to the poor their potatoes.  
“Don’t mind the odd sixpence,” he also would say,  
If he saw they were really ill able to pay.  
    *Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*”

The boys loved his coming ; and often they cried,  
“Oh, *please!* dear old Tim !”—so he gave them a ride  
On the top of his load of potatoes.

The girls loved his coming ;—and one, I know,  
Once threw him a kiss ! though *he* called it “a *blow!*”  
“*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*”

Not much of a scholar, perhaps, was he ;  
Though seldom he passed in an “*X*” for a “*V*,”  
As he paid for a load of potatoes.

“Oh, where is your *grammar!*” cried Timothy John :  
“Two tens and a cypher don’t make twenty-one !—  
‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

No loud politician was honest old Tim ;  
Yet no one could purchase a vote of him  
Though they bought his whole load of potatoes.  
“I vote for the man I think most of,” said he,  
“And *he* wouldn’t offer a bribe to me !—  
‘*Potatoes ! Oh, Potatoes !*’”

“My choice is the man,” cried Timothy John,  
“Who’ll help push the world’s great hand-cart on !—  
And none of your ‘small potatoes.’

The man who could purchase my vote when he would,  
Would purchase my liberty, too, if he could!—

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

Full certainly Tim was a marvelous man,  
And always a happy one, too, as he ran  
In the rear of his load of potatoes.  
He sang from a heart overflowing and free,  
And never mistrusted *Futurity* he.—

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

But Timothy John, a few harvests ago,  
Was noticed as steering unwontedly slow  
With his cargo of new potatoes.

“In the Spring,” he would say, “I shall go under  
ground;—

The biggest potato the hemisphere round!

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

God grant that if Tim has indeed since found  
The Garden where *fruits* are supposed to abound,—

Though never, perhaps, *potatoes*,—

God grant that his voice may be heard on high  
In loftier strains than his own old cry,—

‘*Potatoes! Oh, Potatoes!*’’

“I FEEL THAT I KNOW HER.”

I FEEL that I know her—we smile as we meet;  
We pass every day in the very same street,—  
She hurrying on—heaven only knows where,  
And I in pursuit of ambitions of air.

But who she may be, or the place of her home,  
Or why through the city forced daily to roam,  
Or married or single, a maiden or mother,  
I’m sure I don’t know, any more than another.

Her eyes are a tender and beautiful blue;  
Her hair is the glossiest, goldenest hue;  
Her cheeks are as red as the roses in blow,—  
And her heart is the garden, I feel, where they grow.

We never have spoken—we smile and go by;  
No greeting we utter—except with the eye:  
Thank God she is modest, retiring, and true!—  
And I am as modest and innocent too.

Full often I wonder her name and her station;  
I've known from the first she is foreign by na-  
tion.

Her language—ah me! would that language were  
mine!—

The land of her birth is the land of the *Rhine*.

O Germany! land of sweet music and song!  
My feet for thy vine-covered terraces long!  
With *her* for a guide through thy sun-purpled air,  
How gladly my heart would go wandering there!

Some castle enthroned in thy hills there must  
be,  
That shelter would furnish for her and for me!  
Some crag overhanging some vine-embowered vale,  
Where beauty might bloom, and where love would  
not fail!

Ah me! such a spot it were pleasant to see;  
And pleasanter far in its secret to be!.....  
But flee—flee! ye castles, and day-dreams so  
fair!  
'Tis true ye are castles—but castles in air.

To-morrow I'll meet her again ; and her smile  
Will lighten life's roadway for many a mile.  
That face in my dream, were life's journeying  
done,  
Would lumine the pathway that leads to the sun !

Ah well ! and that day—it will come at the last.  
Our eyes will be dull, and our smiles will have  
passed.  
And never, perhaps, will our voices be heard,  
Nor ever our souls by those accents be stirred.

.....Perchance in the streets that are nigh to  
the Throne,  
Where the heart will have voice, though the tongue  
be unknown,  
We each will discern who the other may be,—  
I better know her, and she better know me.



## LITTLE BOY HARRY.

THOU brave little fellow, so lightsome and free,  
O cease, for a moment, thy frolicsome play ;  
O little boy Harry ! come close to my knee !—  
Come nearer, and listen to what I shall say.

I think of thee often, as last I beheld thee ;  
I love to remember thine earnest, young face,—  
So tender and winsome, as often I held thee,  
Rejoiced at beholding thy manifest grace.

So noble and earnest thy constant expression,  
So grandly embodied within thee was Truth,  
I gladly would sacrifice every possession  
To know that my life was as pure as thy youth !

And when I remember “of such as” my Harry  
“Is made up the kingdom of Heaven” above,  
No cause have I longer to grieve that I tarry ;—  
Already I reign in that kingdom of Love !

O dear little fellow! a blessing be on thee!  
God grant thy whole life may be holy as now!  
And when the great Future with laurels shall crown  
thee,  
I pray they may rest on as noble a brow!

Before thee the Future is slowly appearing;—  
Though years must elapse ere thy manhood be  
nigh:  
O little boy Harry! ne'er doubting nor fearing,  
Press faithfully on, till life's goal thou descry.

But laugh and be merry while youth thou retainest!  
For childhood's glad pleasures will shortly be  
gone:  
The sterner refrain of thy life yet remainest,  
And strength will be needed for conflicts anon.

Before thee the Future as yet is unfolding;  
But trials and triumphs will one day be past:  
O little boy Harry! thy footsteps upholding,  
May heaven and its angels enfold thee at last!

## TO MY FRIENDS ACROSS THE MYSTIC.

THREE friends I have, beyond the widening river  
Which separates my city home from theirs :

    Wavelets at times roar loudly,  
    But still my boat steers proudly ;  
And oft when Evening's flambeaux on the hurrying  
    current quiver,  
I follow where yon faintly flickering Polar radi-  
    ance flares.

Downward the Dipper, on my passage frowning,  
May strive at times to bar my onward way :  
    Yet, with glad illumination,  
    Still the brilliant constellation  
Beckons onward to the city the wide southern hill-  
    slope crowning,—  
Yonder strangely silent city that lies nestling by  
    the Bay.

Fierce February tides may swash in sadness,  
And hurrying ice-floats surge to meet the sea :  
But ice is but liquid solid,  
And its texture aught but stolid  
When my sturdy keel, urged onward by prospective  
warmth and gladness,  
Crashes boldly towards the beacon on the distant  
snow-clad lea !

Or, perchance,—when newly flower-decked, fern-decked, moss-decked,  
Yonder uplands turn in Springtime to the sun,  
And across the Mystic's flurry  
Still with flashing oars I hurry,—  
Vernal zephyrs from the highlands of old Powder-horn and Prospect  
Whisper softly of the Summer in my own heart  
just begun!.....

O my friends!—faithful friends!—whose frequent  
kindness  
I perchance may never half or tenth repay :

Gladly I this thought do render  
Of Regard full true and tender,—  
Lest that Gratitude with warning voice accuse my  
soul of blindness,  
And I fail on Friendship's altar slightest offering  
to display!

BOSTON, 1878.

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### MEDFORD BELLS.

COLLEGE HILL, EARLY AUTUMN, 1879.

I.

LOUD on the murky mid-day air  
The Medford bells are ringing.  
Bold is the verberant rhyme they blare,  
Dull is the threnody wild they dare,  
Doubts to my glad heart bringing.

Dun are the meadows!—in the sky  
Thick clouds of leaves are whirling!  
Sturdiest friendships swiftly fly;  
Æons and ages are passing by,  
Depths into darkness hurling!

## II.

CALM on the cendent evening air  
The Medford bells are ringing.  
Mild is the musical chime they bear,  
Gladly their sibilant song I share,  
Peace to my sad heart bringing.

Ah! of what matter browning fields!  
What matter flowers that wither!  
Brighter-far blossoms Wisdom yields;  
Stronger-far sceptre Virtue wields;—  
Come! let us wander thither!

“TO-DAY THE WINDS OF MARCH  
ARE WILD.”

[WINTHROP, MARCH 27, 1881.]

To-day the winds of March are wild.  
The swallows huddle 'neath the shore;  
Their wings are still—they cannot fly.  
But yonder, whirled about the sky,  
The gulls are circling, o'er and o'er.  
The gull is Ocean's passive child.

The winds of Fate adversely blow.  
My friends and fellows do not sing;  
They sing but when the waves are calm.  
I look not always for the palm,  
I take what laurels Fate may bring.  
With cypress crowned sometimes I go.

## DAFFODILS.

INSCRIBED TO T—— W—— L——.

WITHIN the winding woodland aisles  
Which stately crown our Stoneham hills,  
A myriad wilding daffodils  
Bloom gladly where the sunbeam smiles.

How they in such unwonted earth  
Found home and blossomed, none may know ;  
But buds of a more beauteous glow,  
Ne'er, out of poet's brain, had birth.

Anigh their vernal, mossy bed,  
The pine stands whispering to the spruce ;  
The stripèd squirrel—gay recluse !—  
Swings in the branches overhead.

Around their prize the wondering bees,  
To such soft sweetness all unused,  
Buzzingly gather till infused  
With honey of Hesperides!

Thither the Naiads also come ;  
Thither the fairies fly in haste :  
Never more humble courtiers graced  
A Beauty's court in christendom.

Even the lady-ferns and sedges,  
Turning in sweet surprise to greet  
The beauty nestling at their feet,  
Give the pale strangers welcome pledges.

Thither I, too, my steps retrace,  
Seeking the inspiration there ;  
Meeting within that charmèd air  
A benediction face to face.

Wearily, wearily my feet  
Were wandering 'mid the fern-clad hills : —

What if for me the daffodils  
Had ne'er unveiled their faces sweet!

I drew anigh them as the gloom  
Of evening clad the hills with gray,  
And all the darkness of my way  
Grew glorious with their early bloom.

---

O friend!—*my* friend, though ne'er thy voice  
To me a syllable hath said!.....  
Forgive if I unbidden tread  
Where thou hast called me to rejoice.

Adown the Campus merrily,—  
Myself unseen,—I saw thee go!—  
Saw the exuberant overflow  
Of the young life embound in thee.

The glow thy vermeil cheek which fired;  
The music of thy merry laugh;—

Nor sordid gold had given half  
The benediction these inspired!

Around thee breathed the morning air;  
The grass was springing at thy feet;  
A robin from his green retreat  
Chanted for thee a cheery prayer.

The sighing pine for thee would sing!  
The murmuring breeze for thee be calm!—  
Deem it not strange a lowly psalm  
*I* humbly to thy altar bring!

Wearily, wearily my feet  
Were wandering in the Valley of Doubt:  
Thou spake!—in chaos Light gleamed out!  
Darkness thenceforth was obsolete.

I drew anigh thee as the gloom  
Of Sorrow clad Life's hills with gray,  
And all the darkness of my way  
Grew glorious with thy early bloom.

What if it had been missed by me?—  
The vision of thy fair young face!  
What if my bonds thy buoyant grace  
Had ne'er unbound and set me free!.....

To me henceforth, through life, as now,  
Sacred the spot where thou didst stand!  
Sacred the pressure of thy hand  
Invisible upon my brow!

Sacred the spot where thou didst stand!—  
Thither the angels frequent fly,  
Angels like those that met the eye  
Of Jacob in a foreign land.

Thither I, too, my steps retrace,  
Seeking the inspiration there;  
Meeting within that charmèd air  
A benédiction face to face.

## THE BELLS OF COMO.

[Read before the Zetagathean Society\* of Tufts College Divinity School, at its Seventh Literary Anniversary, May 26, 1881.]

\* "Zetagathean Society,"—*The Society seeking Good.*

IN Italy beyond the sea,—  
Dim, mediæval Italy,—  
When she, whose ancient power and pride  
Had been for centuries thrown aside,  
Was slowly waking from her sleep ;  
And with the inspiration deep  
And ardor of a second birth,  
Among the nations of the earth  
Was taking precedence and place ;—  
When all the Cæsar-line was dust,  
And nothing but decay and rust  
Remained of the Imperial race ;

And a new line of kings had come,  
Immortal throughout christendoim,—  
Dante and Michael Angelo,  
And Petrarch and Boccaccio ;—  
When she, so long the nations' scoff,  
Had risen and flung her languor off,  
And, waking, had betrayed her skill  
In marble, and her power to thrill  
And captivate with harmony  
A waiting, rapt humanity ;—  
In Italy beyond the sea,  
Dim, early modern Italy,  
Was born one day a little child,—  
A little weakling! as if he,  
For whom was meant a destiny  
Amazing, luring, mocking, wild,  
Blissful at times, at times severe,—  
Humble, exalted, mild, austere,—  
Had been by Nature sent to be  
Even in birth an epitome  
Of all the dread, magnificent,  
Vain-glorious accomplishment  
Of his own native monarchy.

He was a marvel of a child,  
His mother thought—the neighbors knew ;  
For often, as he lay, he smiled ;  
And closing his clear eyes of blue,  
Would bend his ear as if he caught  
Some echo of angelic thought,—  
The murmur of rhythmic melody,  
A strain of heavenly harmony.

When out of babyhood he passed,  
And grew in stature,—and at last  
Had come to boyhood,—all his art,  
Untried, imperfect, yet in part  
Revealing what was in his heart,  
Was raptly exercised to bring  
From brass, from iron, from everything  
That answered with melodious ring  
When he should touch it, such a tone  
As always, when he was alone,  
Seemed ringing in the air around,—  
The song still present, and the sound,  
Which once, when he a baby lay,  
The angels sang to him each day.

And as he labored still, apart,  
And leaned to listen,—and on wings  
Of eager wishes would ascend  
Where yonder anthems seemed to blend,  
Echoing without hush or end,—  
His mother wondered at these things,  
And pondered them within her heart.

“What is it, Michael?” she one day  
Entreated,—“Tell me your desire!  
Your eyes are radiant with a fire  
Like that on Como when the sun  
Is setting and the day is done.  
What is it! tell it me, I pray!”  
But Michael only turned away.  
He had no words, no heart, to say,  
Unto his mother even, as yet,  
The longing that was in his soul—  
The wish not yet in his control.  
But as he turned, his eyes were wet!  
For even then there seemed to rise  
The ever-swelling harmony,  
The far-off angel melody,  
Filling the blue ethereal skies

With sweetest notes, as if to wound  
His spirit with ideal sound.

Swiftly the months and seasons ran,—  
The youth still musing,—till one day,  
With something of a wild dismay,  
He woke and found himself a man.  
His thought, his toil, his frequent prayer,  
Had brought no laurel to his side ;  
His soul was still unsatisfied,  
His chimes were still but in the air.

His chimes ! For it was Michael's aim,  
In manhood as in youth the same,—  
His one endeavor,—to create  
So marvelous a chime of bells,  
So fair and void of parallels,  
That they the soul would captivate,  
And a delighted world would own  
The music of their silver tone.

“Some brotherhood of friars,” said he,  
“Some convent here in Italy,  
Will gladly purchase them of me !

Through all the world their fame will flow,  
And pilgrims here will come and go;  
And honor will be mine, and I  
Will build me here a cottage fair,  
And on the morn and evening air,  
Ascending hither, fleeing there,  
Will hear their music till I die."

No jangling chimes like those that rung  
Throughout the vale where Como lay,  
When knelt the brotherhood to pray,  
Would Michael make! but on the day  
When first his silvery bells were swung,  
The monks and friars should all confess—  
Not sins alone and idleness—  
But that their prayers before had known  
No inspiration like the tone  
That echoed from the belfry-throne  
Where Michael's chimes had gained access!  
Surpassed their music should not be  
By any flute of Arcady,  
Or any Hebrew timbrel old,  
Or any fabled Harp of Gold,  
Or any violin whose fame

Had given to its maker's name  
A lustre more than marvelous,—  
A halo such as still adheres  
To him who wrote upon his work  
A name which through the deathless years  
In Music's memory will lurk,—  
“Antonio Stradivarius.”

For years, in secret, Michael strove,  
Untiring, in a little grove,  
Casting and tuning still, anew,  
The metal cups from which he drew  
His hope of honor, wealth, and fame.  
Alike to him were praise and blame,  
Coming from those who nothing knew  
Of his intention or his aim.  
Baffled a myriad times, again  
Untiringly he toiled; and when  
With fleeing years his faith grew dim,  
Again the angels came to him.

And so he strove—nor strove in vain:  
For in the end his patient pain  
Accomplished all his heart's desire.

He labored with his soul on fire ;  
And catching from the angels' song  
The melody he missed so long,  
He tuned in ecstasy sublime  
The clanging bells to perfect chime ;  
Until they rang a silver tone,  
The echo of the angels' own.

A week now hardly passed away,  
Whēn on the artist, pleased and proud,  
There called with offer rich and rare  
A neighboring friar of orders gray ;  
Who, having blest himself, and bowed,  
And laid his hand on Michael's hair,  
“I come, my brother,”—so he spake,—  
“For this your masterpiece to make  
With earnest prayer the prior's request.  
We offer you a price, and take,  
With eager thankfulness confessed,  
And many a benediction rich,  
The wondrous metal marvels, which,  
By holy Mother Mary blest,  
Aided by tireless prayer and thought,  
The cunning of your hands has wrought.”

This the beginning was. The rest,  
Just as he long had dreamed it all,  
Now came to Michael, with such speed  
That in a month his cottage wall,—  
Carrara covered, tiled and tall,—  
Had risen on the margin wide  
Of beautiful blue Como's side ;  
And he from toil and want was freed !

At morning now, at noon and night,  
In rapture at his cottage door,  
Sheltered from summer heat and light  
By clustering vine and sycamore,  
Entranced did Michael daily sit,  
Intently waiting the joyful peal,  
The anthem glad and glorious,  
Which from the convent on the height  
That rose his homestead opposite  
Announced the inmates' hour to kneel—  
Betrayed, with sudden and loud appeal,  
Of pious intent their overplus—  
Or sounded the holy Angelus.

Diviner melody than these

No chimes in all the world could ring;  
To all who harkened, heavenly ease,  
And pardon, such as angels sing  
When mortals fall upon their knees,  
Their notes seraphic seemed to bring.  
To Michael's thought the blest retreat  
Of Eden had no music higher.  
Not fabled Orpheus' golden lyre  
Had ever sounded half so sweet.  
And if at favored Michael's feet  
Nor rock nor forest bowed and sang,  
His soul was often glorified  
With a triumphant, joyful pride  
Which Orpheus never knew or dreamed:  
For when at morn or eventide  
His chimes their silver music rang,  
To him—ah! then to him it seemed  
The waiting angels circled low,  
And caught and raised the echo high,  
And flung it over hill and glen;  
And when the anthem ceased to flow,  
Upbore it with them to the sky,  
And closed it with a sweet Amen.

But now throughout the peaceful vale,  
Along the placid lakelet's marge,  
The storm of war, its iron hail,  
The beat of angry foreign flail,  
The clash of feudal spear and targe,  
Came suddenly and awfully.

As when, from out a summer sky,  
Where flakes of fairest amber hue  
Against a ground of gold and blue  
All day have floated gorgeously,  
There leaps a sudden awful flash,  
The lightning's angry augury ;  
And with a quick, tumultuous crash  
The thunder follows, and the pale  
Blue zenith thickens with the charge  
Of cloudy cohorts ; and the large  
And sturdy oak,—which hitherto,  
Whatever stormy tempest blew,  
Had towered unsmitten,—when the hail  
And whirlwind and the furious blow  
Have ceased, lies shattered, rootless, low,  
All lifeless ; . . . . so throughout the vale  
Of Como, and through all the land,

There came the storm of war ; and so,  
When turmoil met its overthrow,  
And the red, desolating brand  
Had fallen from the invading hand,  
And Michael again reached his home  
From fighting in the ranks of Rome,  
No stone above another stood  
Where once his hard-earned habitude  
Had reared its modest tower and dome.  
The grove, where he for years had toiled,  
The torch had ruthlessly despoiled.  
And more calamitous than all,  
Gone was the monkish brotherhood !  
And erst where cell and cloister stood,  
And prayer reëchoed, wall to wall,—  
Now wrapped in winding-sheet and pall,  
The convent in a ruined heap  
Of ashes lay upon the steep.  
And Michael's bells ! his masterpiece !  
His peerless, his unrivaled bells,  
Whose chimes were never more to cease !  
The mocking mob of infidels  
Had stolen them away, and left  
Their maker mournful and bereft.

The light was taken from his eyes;  
The gate was shut on Paradise.

“Alas!” he murmured. “Woe is me!  
My cup, for all futurity,  
Is filled with misery to the brim!”  
What now indeed remained for him!  
His home, his family, his health  
For labor, and his little wealth,  
These all were gone!—And even the sound  
That once had echoed in the air,  
Luring him upward from the ground  
With melody beyond compare,—  
Sounding from heavenly citadels,—  
This too had vanished with his bells.

Or so it seemed to him at first.  
For afterwards, as he one day  
Was kneeling on the ground to pray,—  
The ruined ground, where he of yore  
Had sat beside his cottage door!—  
Upon his ear a sudden burst  
Of the old melody on high  
Rang rapturously. And from the sky

A voice angelic, clear and loud,  
Came searchingly. "No more delay!  
Up, Michael! up!" it seemed to say;  
"Why stand ye here, with forehead bowed  
And footsteps idle? Follow on!  
Somewhere your bells their joyful tone  
Are ringing even now! Be gone!  
Seek them afar, and claim your own!"

So Michael rose! nor stayed an hour.  
New hope was in his heart; and power  
To journey, did the need require,  
From the blue skies and silver seas  
Of his own Temperate Italy,  
To where the Tropic's flaming sky  
Unrolled its canopy of fire,  
Or where the desolate Arctic breeze  
Blew cold above the mountains drear  
Of the waste northern hemisphere.  
So seized he in that selfsame hour  
His cloak and staff and shallow purse,  
Intent in every hall and tower,  
And every hamlet, to rehearse

The history of his stolen bells—  
The fair and void of parallels!

Steadfast he wandered here and there,  
Seeking his darlings everywhere.  
And not alone in Italy,  
Beneath his native skies of blue,  
But where the Jura mountains threw  
Their shadows on Geneva's sea.  
Not up and down the Alps alone,  
And through and through the Appennine,  
But where the Danube and the Rhine  
Upreared their convent-towers of stone.  
Who knew but here perchance his bells  
Rang out in grief their stolen tone!  
“Who knows,” he cried, “but here there dwells  
A respite for my grief and pain,  
And here my ears, so weary grown,  
Shall ring with harmony again!”  
But when he heard the clang and roar  
That echoed up and down the slopes,  
Sounding from many a convent-shrine,  
Vanished again were all his hopes.

“Alack!” he sighed, “they are not mine!”  
*His* bells revealed their secret lore  
In heavenly harmony! but these,  
What ear could deem their notes divine,  
Or call their anthems melodies!

The seasons went, and came; and went,  
And came again: and still his way,  
Across and through the continent,  
Untiringly, day after day,  
Michael pursued, through cold and heat.  
Ten,—twenty,—thirty years his feet  
Onward unceasingly were bent!  
Far to the East his steps were turned,—  
To where, on priest-fed altars, burned  
Unfading fire; and to the shrine  
Of Bethlehem in Palestine.  
Even through India and Cathay  
His search unfaltering he made.  
No distance could his zeal evade.  
His chimes seemed never far away:  
On mountain, o'er the desert sand,  
On lake, on river, on the land,

Ever they sounded loud and clear,  
Ringing triumphant in his ear.  
His form was bent, his beard was gray,  
His wrinkled face was bronzed and burned ;  
But as a traveler in the night,  
Groping, and waiting for the light,  
Yet walking still,—so Michael turned,  
And waited for the coming day.

It was in Greece, at last, that news  
Arrived to Michael of his bells—  
Amid the towers and citadels  
Of Athens, where, to pray and muse,  
And stray an hour, and lean upon  
The ruins of the Parthenon,  
Had come at length his weary feet.  
A traveler here he met, replete  
With stories wonderful, who said :  
“Somewhere in yonder Western Seas  
I heard their marvelous melodies ! ”  
But where, he could not say ;—for dead,  
Now, in his memory, the ground  
Where he had listened to their sound.

But Michael had at least a cue;  
And hurrying to Italy,  
His way he purposed to pursue  
Along the borders of the sea,  
Through all the countries of the West,  
And there, God willing, end his quest.

In a few days his feet had come  
To buried Herculaneum;  
And when he saw the mountain's brim,  
Piercing the cloud-rack over him,—  
Gazing as with defiant air  
Upon the wasted cities there,—  
On Michael's burning heart the tears  
Fell thick and fast for wasted years;  
As on Vesuvius' burning height  
The rain fell hissing in the night.

Then north, to the unblest estate  
Where ancient Rome sat desolate,—  
Discrowned, like Lear, by daughters she  
Had pampered in prosperity.  
And there in Rome, at last! he heard

The story he so long had sought.  
He met a mariner, who brought  
The grateful, long-expected word,  
That yonder on the sun-lit shore  
Of Erin there were silver bells,  
So fair and void of parallels,  
That he who heard would fain implore  
That he might hear them evermore.

A month went by. A little bark  
Was moored on Shannon's placid tide.  
A boat was pushing from her side ;  
And o'er the silver wave the dark  
Fantastic turret of St. Mary's lay,  
Far-shadowed by the dropping day.

Kneeling within the little boat,  
His streaming eyes upon the tower,  
Was Michael!—Happy, happy hour!  
“O bells !” he cried,—“one marvelous note!  
Long have I toiled and sought for thee!  
Ring out! ring out, and welcome me!  
Ring at the setting of the sun!  
Ring! and my pilgrimage is done !”

The answer came! A silvery shower  
Burst from the old cathedral tower!  
A smile illumed the wanderer's face:  
His heart sang inward jubilee.  
The bells were his! and time nor place  
Had marred or dulled their melody.

But Michael! When the rowers sought  
To take in theirs his withered hand,  
And rouse him, as they neared the land,  
They did his guardian-angels wrong!  
His soul the seraph-hosts had caught,  
And borne it upward with the song!  
The melody was Michael's knell—  
The anthem was his passing-bell!

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And now, my brothers! at whose word  
Of cordial welcome and command  
I come again a little while  
To greet you and to take your hand,

And meet your well-remembered smile,  
And read to you, in simple phrase,  
In memory of other days,  
This verse of mine! — Your kindly word  
To come to you I gladly heard;  
Though deeming I had little right  
The place or power to emulate  
Of those who on a loftier height,  
Beholding more seraphic light,  
Have power the heart to captivate.  
The silvery phrase which Sidney knew,  
The golden light which Milton drew  
With cunning hand across his verse,  
My pen indeed may not rehearse,  
Nor in its highest ecstasy  
Attain the sweet simplicity  
Of Bryant's or of Wordsworth's art:  
But pondering as best I might  
A song to touch the thinking heart,  
And questioning what land, what date,  
What freak of Fortune or of Fate,  
What winter gloom or summer light  
I best might open to your sight,

O brothers, I have brought you this!  
And though indeed the gleam you miss  
Which other hand had made more bright,  
To you this Legend Beautiful,  
Of patience under painful rule,  
Of innocence as white as wool,  
Of eager wandering to regain  
Surcease of weariness of brain,  
And finding only death and pain,—  
To you this legend I relate,  
To you this tale I dedicate.

Ye are the Seekers after Good!  
On earth ye have no habitude.  
Your lives ye dedicate in youth  
To painful, long, unending search,—  
And in the portals of the Church  
Seek Knowledge and Eternal Truth!  
To-day, of Truth perchance the prize  
Ye think ye hold before your eyes.  
Through care, and toil, and anxious thought,  
The melody ye long have sought  
Seems ringing in the sun-lit air;

And ye are confident, forsooth,  
And "Thus and so," ye say, "is Truth!"

What shall I say to you?— Beware?  
Clasp not with fervor to your soul  
A dream so flattering? so unreal?.....  
I would not mock your glad appeal!  
Far rather would my hand unroll,  
If such were possible, a scroll  
On which were written, "Yea! your search  
Has led you to the one true church!  
Your dream—it is indeed The Truth,  
And ye are conquerors ev'n in youth!"

Alas! we know not where it lies!  
It is not ours with seraph's eyes  
To pierce God's hidden destinies!  
We seek, we knock, we vainly call,  
Like Pilate in the council-hall.  
And still the Christ no answer makes!—  
And still the rabble comes, and takes,  
And carries him without the wall!

What then? Shall we forbear our toil?  
Blow out our lamp? neglect the oil?  
Repose on some Calypso-beach,  
Or to the hall of Circe flee?  
Heaven lies not far beyond our reach:  
We almost hear its melody.  
A messenger has shown the way;  
We heed, we follow on To Know.  
But only when, like Michael, we  
Are met by angels, and the glow  
And glamour of the life below  
Is merged in the resplendent ray  
And beauty of the Heavenly Day,  
Will the sweet Truth we long have sought  
Unto our waiting souls be brought.



## MOTHER AND SON.

IN the heart of a city of wealth untold,  
In the heart of a city with wealth grown cold,

A Woman, with weary heart and brain,  
Bowed trembling beneath a load of pain.

The firelight danced on her darkened wall:  
But it danced in figures tragical.

A beam from the occident sun shone in:  
But it gleamed with the flash of a javelin.

The man she had loved,—whose home had been  
hers,—  
Was lying to-day 'mid the sepulchres!.....

With eager embrace, in her desolate grief,  
The babe at her breast gave a glad relief:

“Oh wait, my soul!” On her startled sight  
A gleam from the Future flashed clear and bright.

“Oh wait! till my boy perchance shall grow  
To realize what he so soon must know:

“He then in my heart shall fill the void  
Left desolate by hopes destroyed!”

—The years swept past; and with turbulent tread:  
Yet Hope still lingered, nor Faith grew dead.

The mother, with earnest heart and smile,  
Toiled alway, and sang at her toil the while.

Earnest she labored from week to week;  
And hardly she kept the bloom in her cheek.

The race was long, the burden was hard;  
But onward she struggled, nor sought reward.

Her bright little boy, now five years old,  
Was growing in graces manifold.

If his body was little, his heart was big;  
And his thought could go light over many a league.

He oft at her side her labor condoled,  
And listened to many a tale she told.

The light of her love in her eye shone clear;  
For her heart was a fountain of love and cheer:

And a prayer for her darling, with every word,  
Went up to a Throne where prayer is heard.

With a smile and a tear the eye of the boy  
Oft flashed on his mother an answer of joy.

His quivering lip in expectancy lay;—  
For the end of each story himself could say:

A kiss and embrace, a caress and a smile,  
And rapture in perfect fruition the while!

His eyes wore a look that a limner might give  
To a Babe in a Manger—contemplative,

And full of the wonder that filled the thought  
Of Christ when he saw what the Magi brought.

A flash of the Future oft flits o'er his face,  
As he ponders the proverbs her sweet lips trace;

And his heart, with never a shadow of pain,  
Cries "Wait, my dear mother,—until I am ten!"

"The labor my father for thee had begun,  
Completed shall be by the hand of his son.

"Oh wait! and the love which so truly is mine,  
Returned with rich interest shall be thine!"

—Full swift is the pace Time's chariot drives!  
The boy at the age of his wish arrives:

But ah! though his heart is willing and large,  
He cannot yet stagger 'neath helmet and targe.

Again he beseeches,—his tears between,—  
"O wait, my dear mother!—I soon am fifteen!"

“The hands which now are so slender and thin  
Will soon be grown stouter, and stronger of skin.

“The heart of a man, if in garb of a boy,  
Is deemed by the world too untried to employ!

“But fast I am growing in size and in strength,  
And the world shall acknowledge its wrong at  
length!”

His eyes wore a look that a limner might give  
To a Christ in the desert—full sensitive;

And full of the wonder that filled the eyes  
Of Christ when he pondered earth’s apathies.

“Hope ever! the love which has long been mine,  
Returned with rich interest shall be thine!”

—Again fly the years: the hour is nigh!  
But again there rises the selfsame cry,—

“Oh wait, my dear mother!—if wait you can!—  
For what I have promised,—until I’m a man!

“Have patience! the love which has long been  
mine,  
Returned with rich interest shall be thine.

“With riches, with honor, with home, will I  
Thy slightest expression of want supply.

“Men look with disdain on my aims and my  
hopes;  
And steep are life’s mountain and hill-side slopes:

“But ever a beacon still beckons me on:—  
The faith of a father fulfilled in a son!

“Have patience! the love which has long been  
mine,  
Returned with rich interest shall be thine.”

His brow wore a look—ah! had limner but  
known!—  
Of a Christ in a Multitude walking alone;

And full of the wonder that filled the gaze  
Of Christ meeting scorn when he asked not for  
praise.

And ah! how the years roll on apace!  
And oh, how rapidly grows the trace

On the brow of the mother, of want and woe;  
And how bitter the pangs of poverty grow!

The child has at last arisen a man:  
But the struggle is hard for bread—for bran!

And his promised bestowal of honor and pelf—  
Has shrunk to a battle for bread for himself!

The woman toils on;—as for twenty years  
She already has done through hopes and fears.

But her heart is wondering, “Where is the end?”  
Though the man cries, “Surely it must amend!

“O wait, my dear mother!—if wait you can!—  
No toil ever ended ere yet it began!

“Have patience! the love which has long been  
mine,  
Returned with rich interest shall be thine.

“No promise than this I am able to give ;  
For life, I have found, is but toiling to live !

“But wait, my dear mother!—the future yet  
May garlands of roses and laurel beget !”

His brow wore a look that a limner might crave :  
Of unmerited obloquy patient and brave ;

Eyes full of the sadness a life of woe  
Had graven the Nazarene’s brow below ;

And full of the pain that earth’s infamy  
Made once to o’erflow in Gethsemane.

“But wait, my dear mother!—the future yet  
May garlands of roses and laurel beget !”

—So years wung on—and the laurel came !.....  
But it bloomed on a grave without stone or name.

In its arms of earth the grave holds fast  
The remains of lives and hopes long past.

The mother and son together are laid:  
Their struggle for life has at last been stayed.

Bravely they acted their wearisome part,  
The world looking on without thought or heart.

Perchance in a different world and sphere  
A wealth they enjoy which they never had here.

Perchance in its arms<sup>—</sup> the grave holds not  
Aught but the shame which should be forgot!

In a sphere beyond this world of Time,  
Their lives perchance may be sublime.

—Ah well! to us all, vain hopes arise,  
And float, mere phantoms, before our eyes.

How oft is our wail, “O wait, my soul,  
And Love shall be thine as the seasons roll!”

And ever the years sound back the cry,—  
“No city we have but is built on high!”

Not in this world—ah no! not here  
Is the glad fruition of hope and fear.

But the life now lived is not Life at all:  
It is merely to Life the entrance-hall.

Life is begun, and only begun,  
When men with a shudder have called it Done!

In a sphere beyond this world of Time,  
Men's lives perchance shall be sublime.\*

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\* "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,  
And likewise Lazarus evil things:  
But now he is comforted." —*Luke xvi: 25.*



## THE LOVED ONES WHO HAVE LEFT US.

*Tί ζητείτε τὸν ζωντα μετὰ τῶν νεκρῶν ;  
οὐκ ἔστιν ὁδε, ἀλλ᾽ ἡγερθη.*

Luke xxiv, 5.

WHERE are the friends,—the loved ones who have  
left us?—

Who outward with the tide,  
The while we mourn the fate that hath bereft us,  
Have vanished from our side?

Within the dull cold earth, perchance, their bodies;  
Or low beneath the sea:  
But Yonder,—upward,—where the light and God  
is,  
Their souls rest peacefully!

No more among the dead we seek the living!  
But thither in the air

We rise on wings of faith, with glad thanksgiving,  
And view our loved ones there!

As once of old the Jews on Olive Mountain  
With eager, wistful eye  
Gazed up to view of life the Lord and Fountain,  
And saw Him in the sky,—

So we, with hearts at ease and touched with glad-  
ness,  
No more bemoan the tomb,  
But view it void and empty of its sadness,  
Despoiled of death and gloom.

There is no Death! At most there is but parting:  
And parted ones may meet!  
Life's separated arches, newly starting,  
Shall one day stand complete!

No more among the dead we seek the living:  
But upward in the air  
We rise on wings of faith, with glad thanksgiving,  
And view our loved ones there!

What sailor knows, beneath the wave he lies on,  
The secrets of the sea?

Who fathoms Time, beyond the dim horizon  
That bounds Eternity?

Who knows the depths of the Eternal Spaces?  
The course the comets run?

Who knows what light illuminates men's faces  
Beyond the moon and sun?

Daily we wonder what they may be doing  
In that fair heaven afar:

Nor deem we that their steps are but pursuing  
The space from star to star.

Love, labor, progress!—this the constant story  
That God in Nature speaks:

Love, labor, progress!—this the tireless glory  
Of the Eternal weeks!

“What! know ye not that hitherto my Father  
Hath worked, and I too work?”—  
No dull Forgetfulness, where angels gather  
In yonder Heaven may lurk!

“There will be Light!”—Still sounds the Voice  
Eternal.

And aye the Light will be.  
New stars, new suns, new satellites supernal  
Blaze forth continually.

Whose hands, it may be, clothe the high Sierras  
Of those new worlds with white?  
Whose kindly fingers dissipate the terrors  
Of their Antarctic night?

Invention fails; imagination falters;  
We may not read the sky:  
But this we know: Anigh the heavenly altars,  
Affection cannot die!

They love us still! the beautiful and tender!  
Who early, one by one,  
Have fled earth’s darkness for supernal splendor,  
Earth’s shadows for the sun!

They love us still! and with each swift pulsation  
With which they speed the air,

Let fall upon the waiting, wide creation  
A wealth of love and prayer.

They know the sad, despairing hour of Sorrow,  
That weighs the heart with woe,—  
And whisper softly of a sure To-morrow,  
When tears shall cease to flow.

They know the pain, the poverty, the parting ;  
The dull and aching heart ;  
The quivering lip, the tear-drop at its starting ;—  
They share of these a part.

They know our sins ! They see in secret places  
The hidden lust and pride !—  
What wonder if at times they veil their faces,  
And turn with tears aside !

They know the weakening hour, the wild temptation ;  
They bid Despair revive :  
They fight anew the host of hell's legation ;  
They save the soul alive.

— O Angel-Sisters! have us in your keeping!  
We know ye are not dead!  
We know our hearts might hear, were they not  
sleeping,  
Your pinions overhead!

O Angel-Mothers! beautiful as Morning,  
And brighter than the Day!  
Our earthly doubts with heavenly grace adorning,  
Ye steal our hearts away!

— But on my listening ear the mournful chiming  
Of midnight bells doth rise;—  
I cease the labored dissonance of rhyming,  
And leave you in the skies!

But ah! the separation is but seeming!  
I know ye still are there!  
I sleep! and on triumphant wing, while dreaming,  
I join you in the air!

## AN ANSWER.

They know the pain, the poverty, the parting;  
The dull and aching heart;  
The quivering lip, the tear-drop at its starting;—  
They share of these a part.

— *See ante.*

It has by some been asked of me,  
“Why thus I wrote?” and “If I meant,—  
If measured,—in its full intent,  
The thought they deemed a fallacy?”

I would not be misunderstood:  
I weighed the words, whate'er I said,  
About the dear ones we call dead,  
About their influence for good.

It cannot be that those we love,  
If knowing all the pain and fear  
And sorrow that beset us here,  
Are happy, in the home above?

*We* are not happy when we see  
Around us sorrow, pain, and sin?—  
The wave that gulfs the sailor in  
Gulfs other hearts as hopelessly?

The fever that its heat allays  
Only by draining dry the blood,  
Drains also dry the feverish flood  
That in the watcher's pulses plays?

The crimes that cause the soul to start;  
That cause the over wise to see  
Depravity's totality  
Embound in every human heart;—

Youth's wanton seed, whose ripening grain  
Shall grind to bread of tears and groans;  
The secret sins that gnaw the bones  
And eat the nerves that feed the brain;—

The petty thirst for public place;  
The pride of power, the lust of wealth,  
That stay at loss of name nor health,  
And laugh at laws with wise grimace;—

*We* are not happy when we see  
Around us sorrows, sins, like these?  
Alas! nor power himself to please  
Had he who walked in Galilee:

Yet looking evil through and through  
He saw the good that lay concealed,  
The good to others unrevealed,  
And in the false beheld the true.

So they, our friends!—(thus runs my dream,)—  
Whose vision has been cleared to see,  
Behold, where we obscurity,  
The things that are, not those which seem.

The breeze that over Calvary blew,  
And caught the Sufferer's tender prayer,  
Still breathes and echoes in the air,  
“Forgive! they know not what they do!”

Who then will say that men should mourn,  
And mourn as one without a hope,  
When, falling on the upward slope,  
They seem like dead leaves downward borne?

Who constant mount are not the men  
Who know the nobleness of life ;  
But they who beauty learn through strife,  
And they who fall to rise again.

With clearer eyes than eyes of earth,  
The spirits of our dear ones dead  
In these our days discomfited  
Behold our other, better birth.

And still my heart would fondly pray,  
“ Know me, my sister, know me still !  
Know me, dear friend, through good and ill,  
Through doubt and dark, to perfect day.”



## G O N E.

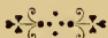
FROM my sleep I start, and gaze without.  
What is this load—this load of doubt—  
This weight, that presses so hard and deep  
Upon my heart that I cannot sleep?  
That presses so hard—with such a heat—  
That my burning heart will scarcely beat?

Sunk is the star that beckoned me on!  
She whom I loved is gone, is gone!

I gaze from my window—I gaze on high:  
Coldly the moon slants down the sky—  
Cold as the cold and icy weight  
That lies in the Valley Desolate—  
That lies in the valley of death and gloom  
Where earth for its beautiful bride made room.  
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on!  
She whom I loved is gone, is gone!

Faint on my bed falls the light of stars :  
Red at the door of his tent stands Mars—  
Red as the lurid light that throws  
Vesuvius' shade on Italian snows.  
—Faintly it falls on her lowly mound,  
And reddens the landscape all around.  
Sunk is the star that beckoned me on !  
She whom I loved is gone, is gone !

O what to my heart remains of good ! . . . .  
—I mind that when last by her side I stood,  
She pointed her finger—she pointed high :  
“I die,” she murmured, “yet shall not die ! ”  
That finger uplifted I still can see ;  
And it beckons, eternally beckons to me.  
She whom I loved—ah no ! not gone !  
The star that once beckoned still beckons me  
on !



## A CANE FROM GETHSEMANE.

A SIMPLE cane is here,—a pilgrim staff:  
Yet on its polished face,  
In quaintly graven Hebrew paragraph,  
A sacred name I trace.

“Gethsemane.—Mount Olivet.” The phrase  
Bespeaks the favored earth  
Where, ages since,—in unremembered days,—  
Its sacred tree had birth.

A traveler brought it—fragrant with the air  
Of that clear Syrian sky.  
“Here, friend,” he said, “the staff is yours; you care  
For such things more than I.”

I hold it in my hand, as here I sit,  
And musing close my eye:

And far and fast doth subtle Fancy flit,  
Imagination fly.

Beneath the swaying bough from which was plucked  
The olive cane I hold,  
Dark Hebrew boys have played, and, playing, sucked  
Its fruit times manifold.

In shorn Gethsemane, even to this day,  
Is shown the grotto wild  
Where Abraham prepared the wood to slay  
Isaac his first-born child.

Here David, harp in hand, from yonder hills  
His native Bethlehem nigh,  
Oft wandered with his sheep, the rippling rills  
And quiet waters by,

And rested, sweeping with his hand the strings  
Melodious with praise,—  
Laying his head upon these rootlets' rings,  
Lit by the sun's last rays!

Here Solomon had come, with timbrels, flutes,  
And cymbals clashing loud ;  
With solemn sackbuts, fifes, and silvery lutes,  
In royal garments proud ;

With damsels rich in dyes from Tyrian shore ;  
Playing at games of chance ;  
Laughing to see upon the leafy floor  
The Jewish maidens dance.

Here Philip's son, great Alexander, came,  
His hands with slaughter wet,  
And bowed himself before the jeweled flame  
Of priestly coronet.

The god of Macedon was Mars the Red,  
His empire on increase :  
The God of Shiloh's olives, overhead,  
Here gently whispered, "Peace ! "

Here Jesus, Joseph's son, a mightier King,  
Weighed down with woes of men,  
Came praying he perchance their lives might bring  
To God and heaven again.

Here too, while his disciples slept, he sweat  
As it were drops of blood ;—  
His brow, in agony, already wet  
With Friday's crimson flood.

And here the angel came, in raiment white,  
To strengthen him and bless,  
Making a Bethel of the darksome night,  
And joy of his distress.

Here Judas, jeering, brought the priestly crowd  
With lanterns, swords and staves,—  
His thirty silver pieces jingling loud  
And murmuring “Paupers’ graves !”

Here Titus came ! and with his army vast  
Uprooted every tree.  
Thy glory then, Jerusalem, was past !  
And thine, Gethsemane !

But ere that fatal hour, the cane I hold  
Was plucked from off its tree,  
And down through monkish cloisters dim and old  
At last has come to me.

This very bough, perhaps, its portion gave  
For Abraham's altar-fire,  
When sadly building—deeming nought could save—  
His first-born's funeral-pyre.

This very bough— who knows?—the bough may  
be  
That sheltered David's lambs ;  
Beneath which Solomon, the Wise, in glee  
Made puns and epigrams ;

That Alexander bowed beneath ; that he  
Of Nazareth sought for prayer ;  
That angels' pinions brushed ; that treachery  
Sought out and made a snare!.....

O sacred bough! from thy long history  
Some lesson I would learn !  
Would that from thee some heavenly mystery  
Within my soul might burn !

## KALLIGO.

[See Note at end of volume.]

## I. PRELUDE.

IN that wonderful land of the river St. John's,  
First known to the Spanish Hidalgos and Dons  
Who followed Leone to its flowery coast  
In search of new wealth and perpetual youth,  
Lie hid in its deserts of tropical growth  
Full many a marvel and many a boast.

But not Ocklawaha, that marvelous stream  
Whose verdurous banks seem the breath of a  
dream,  
Nor ancient Magnolia's health-haunted spring,  
Nor aught of the forest's perennial bloom,  
Might furnish a tale of so sombre a gloom  
As that which the Floridan cypresses sing.

I stood on the bounds of a mighty morass;  
And round me while glimmered the quivering glass  
Of the turbulent waters, there came to my ear  
A wail for the lost ones its jungles amid,—  
A wail for the desolate ones who are hid  
In its innermost recesses year upon year.

From Mexico's gulf, to the northernmost strand  
Where booms the Atlantic on Floridan sand,  
Is heard from the forest its mournful lament.  
Rare blossoms may bloom in the middle-land  
maze,  
And sunbeams may dance where the pelican  
plays,  
But naught of its dirge doth the woodland re-  
lent.

Perchance in the wilds of the Maranon isle,  
Or far in the jungles of Congo or Nile,  
Lie phantasies hid which mankind never sees.  
But he who would learn of the Floridan's haunt,  
Or seek the sonata the cypresses chant,  
May hear the weird anthem in every breeze.

## II. KALLIGO.

ON the half-submerged edge of the Kalligo Swamp,  
Whose tropical gorgeur would rival the pomp  
Of ancient Assyria's purple day,  
An aged man, in the garb of the poor,  
Stood silently kneeling beside the door  
Of a hut long ruined and gone to decay.

The silver of seventy besprinkled the hair  
Of the Florida Cracker—whose simplified air  
Bespoke him of nature as rough and uncouth  
As ever a man in the bush may become  
When wifeless and childless and lacking a home.  
Yet full in his eye shone the fire of truth.

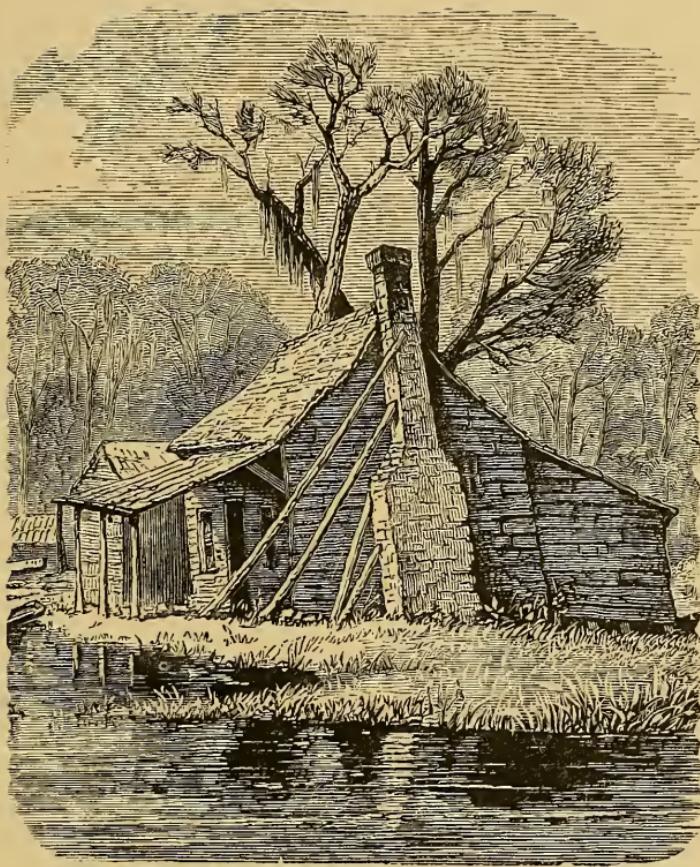
His form was as bent as the gnarled cypress trunk  
Which lay at his feet—like a fugitive monk  
Escaped from its cloister amid the morass.  
His brow to the evening breeze lay bare,  
And tremblingly murmuring a prayer  
His heart showed clear as a crystal glass.

High over his head, through the cypress boughs  
Which stretched o'er the hut where he muttered  
his vows,

The on-rushing wind soughed harshly and cold ;  
And the wild-hanging mosses, thick fluttering down,  
So madly and fierce by the storm were blown  
That it seemed some terrible tale they told.

The hut, like the owner, was tottering fast :  
Through hardly the oncoming gust could it last  
If kind should not blow the encompassing gale.  
The mammoth-built chimney stood leaning awry ;—  
Propped up by frail timbers which kept it on high  
It soon must succumb should the tempest assail.

A back-ground of forest lent shade to the scene,—  
A forest the dankest of forests terrene,  
And filled with the noisomest vapors and gloom.  
Dead trunks and dry branches swayed sighing in  
pain,  
Enrobed in thick moss as with verdure again ;  
Enwrapped as in grave-clothes and waiting the  
tomb.



"The hut, like the owner, was tottering fast."

*—Page 126.*



The giant palmetto and cypress were there,  
O'erhung by wild parasites blossoming fair,  
And draped with the trumpet-vine's scarlet ar-  
ray.

Here petals of purple convolvulus twined;  
There picturesque chaplets of white interjoined,  
Grotesque in their glory and gorgeously gay.

On many a marvel which Nature discloses  
Man's eye never looks, and the daintiest roses  
Bloom wild where his footsteps may never have  
stirred.

Here blooming and blushing, forever in prime,  
Untouched by decay in a century's time,  
Were splendors unknown but to reptile and  
bird.

Unseen by man's eye, and untouched by his hand,  
Lie treasures unnumbered awaiting command,  
If only his heart and his will say the word.  
With noble realities life is replete:  
But he who may seek them with wandering feet  
Shall never earth's best benediction have heard.

## III.

WILD, wild, through the forests of Kalligo Swamp  
The winds in the thickly-hung foliage romp,  
And sigh through the groins and the aisles of  
the trees.

The snake-bird and buzzard, the vampire and bat  
Whirr frightened from branches where croaking they  
sat,  
Intermingling their cries with the murmuring  
breeze.

The waters roll darkly and sullenly back ;  
The deadly-toothed moccasin turns in its track  
And spits out its venom at rustling leaves.  
The Floridan hermit still kneels at his prayer—  
His brow to the evening breeze yet bare,  
His accents like rustle of whispering sheaves.

High over his head, through the cypress boughs  
Which stretched o'er the hut where he muttered  
his vows,  
The on-rushing wind soughed harshly and cold ;

And the wild-hanging mosses, thick fluttering down,  
So madly and fierce by the storm were blown,  
That it seemed some terrible tale they told.

But never a thought to the wind's wild wail  
Gave the desolate Cracker. With fervency pale  
He poured out his soul in so mystic a prayer,  
So mournful and strange, so pathetic and weird,  
That a listener hearing would doubt what he heard  
As a man would doubt music if heard in the  
air.

Like cords on his brow purple veins were dis-  
tended ;  
Long nervously clinched, till his anthem was ended,  
His fingers convulsively, tremblingly, twitched.  
Weird chorus the elements wailed to his prayer,  
And wildly the paroquet screamed in the air,  
Its plumage with gold and with green enriched.

O ye of the cities and sunlight! whose years  
Have a thought for the lost of far hemispheres!  
Whose hearts have a throb for earth's desolate  
ones! —

Perchance in the Florida Cracker's lament  
Some thought ye may find of increasing content  
With temperate skies and less tropical suns.

## IV.

“THOU GOD!” Thus the desolate hermit began;—  
And call nor entreaty from wearier man  
E'er fled from the earth to find voice at the  
Throne.

“I fain from my bosom my burden would fling:  
But vainly I mourn in my suffering,  
And vainly I grope for a Hand in my own!

“Thou knowest that never, for twenty long  
years,  
Has aught of affection found voice in my ears,  
Or wife or a friend had a home in my heart.  
My Lucy, she fled from her prison of clay  
Full twenty long Summers ere dawn of to-day;  
And Harry, my oldest, fell dead from his cart.—

“He drove, down below here, the ferryman’s team,  
Transporting such tourists from river to stream  
As searched for adventure in swamp and morass.  
But one day his horses proved frantic and wild,  
And down in the cypress-woods murdered my child  
By flinging him fierce on the stone-stubbled grass.

“Men had told me no likelier lad than my Harry  
Was known in the country. They said he could  
carry

His head with the highest and noblest if he  
Would go with them North to some city or town  
Which they mentioned as being a place of renown.—

But Harry, poor boy! to the town preferred *me*.

“They said he was handsome! — Ah, nobody needs  
To tell a fond father what he himself heeds  
A thousand times better than they — than all  
others!

And if he *was* handsome, that wasn’t the whole :—  
For Harry was handsome in heart too, and soul!  
And nobler to me than most boys to their  
mothers.

“Just twenty he was, when they killed him—those  
horses!

And tender and trusting as if all the forces  
Of Nature for years had been waiting his coming,—  
Awaiting his coming, and gladly preparing  
Her purest and best, and with him at last sharing  
Them all—all the graces she long had been  
summing.

“Then Robert—poor Robert! Or dead or alive  
I never have heard from him since he was five!  
Some vagabond stole him away from me—God!  
It killed his poor mother—my Lucy, my wife.  
She was weakly before, and this ended her life.  
She lingered a year or two—yonder’s her sod.

“If Robert’s alive now, he’s thirty, poor boy!.....  
Perhaps it was well for him!.....little of joy  
Or of happiness he would have known here with  
me!

I hope he’s a man who would scorn to do wrong—  
Not thoughtless, and hurried away with the throng.  
Perhaps he’s a scholar—a parson, may be!

“I *would* have liked one of my babies to be  
Of use in upraising the world a degree!—

His mother and I often talked of it so.  
We had heard that a parson was one who in time  
Would come to a place they called ‘Heaven,’ and  
‘a clime  
Where Love reigned,’—and we wished our poor  
Bobbie might go!

“The parson who chanced at my hovel one day  
As down the lagoon he had happened to stray  
With friends who were seeking adventure and  
mirth,—

*That* parson, he told of a home in the sky  
Where *all*, who were willing, when called on to  
die,  
Should find the sweet rest they had ne’er found  
on earth.

“He spoke of a Father who cared for us all!  
Of One who to earth came poor sinners to call  
To a feast which He said should in heaven be  
spread.

‘Above in the house of my Father,’ said He,  
‘Are mansions unnumbered preparing for thee,  
Where ne’er shall be hunger, nor darkness, nor  
dread.’

“‘No darkness, no dying, but Infinite Good !’—  
So ended the minister. .... Here in the wood  
For seventy-odd years I have lived in the dark !  
In the dark, O my God ! for these seventy years,  
Encompassed by deaths, doubts, and longings and  
fears,—  
Nor once in the night met a luminous spark !

“For years at a time I have scarce seen a face.  
I have heard in the world there is many a place  
Where people are living encompassed by joy.  
Here ignorance, blindness, despair abound  
Through long generations. .... If Robert has found  
A more sun-lit abode, I thank heaven, poor boy !

“The parson seemed happy. His face, like a dream  
Of deepest content, was illumed by a gleam  
That must have been shot from the heavenly Day

Of which he was herald—a radiant glow!....  
But alas! his companions were eager to go,—  
They were waiting,—I dared not beseech him  
to stay.

“....It was only a day or two back that he  
called....

In pain from my hovel to-night I have crawled  
To meet him again—for he said he would  
come!

He knew I was sick—knew perhaps I would die  
In a month or two more—and the gleam in his  
eye

Was as kind as my Bobbie's would be if at  
home!

“And I thought, when he stood by my side, and  
his hand

Held tenderly over my forehead the band  
Which he moistened and folded, all fragrant and  
cool—

That he looked as my Bobbie would look in his  
place!

And I felt a hot something fall full on my face  
As he said 'though as scarlet' and 'whiter than  
wool.'

".....But he'll not be in time—I am weaker to-  
night.....

He said I would meet her again, in the light—  
My Lucy!.....and *them*, too, my boys that are  
dead!.....

The winds bellow hoarsely—the forest-trees crack.  
Robert! Robert! come back to your father! come  
back!.....

O God! what is this that my frenzy has said!

".....O Father of Love! from thy throne in the  
sky!.....

If one so untutored and simple as I  
May hope to partake of the joys of thy Home,  
I pray that the peace which thy promise has given  
May one day be mine in that infinite Heaven  
To which thou hast called us in kindness to  
come!"

## v.

WILD, wild, through the forests of Kalligo Swamp  
The winds in the thickly-hung foliage romp,  
And sigh through the groins and the aisles of  
the trees.

The Florida Cracker still kneels—but his prayer  
At last is complete, and his silvery hair  
Falls damp on a forehead bowed low to his  
knees!

The winds bellow hoarsely—the forest-trees crack.  
The on-swooping tempest—fierce, furious, black—  
With the hermit's last words strikes the frailly-  
built hut!

He moves not nor struggles—though low at his  
feet  
With a crash falls the hut in wild ruin com-  
plete.....  
His eyes on earth's tempests forever are shut.

Away on the wings of the gale blew the dust  
Upraised by the wind in the lumber and rust.

And away on the wings of fair spirits out-  
spread,

To the limitless realms of the ocean of air,  
Sped the soul of the Cracker—what voice shall  
say where?.....

Sadly, sadly the cypress moaned dirge for the  
dead.

## VI.

WHEN the sun the next morning, red, lurid, and  
hot,

Rose flinging a luminous glare on the spot,

The party of tourists who shortly before  
Had called at the place, here again had arrived,—  
And with them the one whose kind office had  
shrived

(As it proved) the lone Cracker now dead on  
the shore.

Through the swamp wildly rushing, they came as  
in haste,

Peering anxiously, wildly about, through the waste.

“O my father! my father!” the minister cried.—  
It was Robert! the Cracker’s son Robert indeed. ....

“O my father!—too late have I come for thy  
need?

Would God, O my father, for thee I had died!”

In the swamp he had met with a stranger, who  
said,—

“You are Robert. Your father has mourned you  
as dead.

When a boy you were stolen away to the  
North.”

Though the storm had impeded—back, back  
through the brake,

Through the swamp, to the hut on the edge of  
the lake,

The son hastened quickly. .... But life had gone  
forth.

## VII.

WITH the dawn of the morning the tempest had  
ceased.

In a plot of fair lawn, with its head to the  
east,—

Where the sun first should strike when it  
rose,—a rude grave

Was dug by the minister's friends for the dead.

And a boat, with sad garlands of cypress o'er-  
spread,—

A rude funeral-barge,—bore the corse o'er the  
wave ;

O'er the wave, through long watery alleys of  
trees ;

Under thick-hanging mosses soft-swung by the  
breeze ;—

From the storm-shattered hovel where sorrow  
had been,

To the low narrow grave roughly dug in the sod;—  
To the bosom of earth and the bosom of God.  
..... And the son returned North, life anew to  
begin.

Life anew to begin,—with a weight in his heart:  
With a wail in his ears that would never depart—  
A wail as of forests when tempests are nigh,  
The murmur of waters in madding unrest,  
The wraith-mocking rustle, despairing, unblest,  
Of wild-hanging mosses fierce-blown to the sky.

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VIII.

I STOOD on the bounds of a mighty morass;  
And round me while glimmered the quivering  
glass  
Of the turbulent waters, there came to my ear

A wail for the lost ones its jungles amid,—  
A wail for the desolate ones who are hid  
In its innermost recesses year upon year.

From Mexico's gulf, to the northernmost strand  
Where booms the Atlantic on Floridan sand,  
Is heard from the forest its mournful lament.  
Rare blossoms may bloom in the middle-land  
    maze,  
And sunbeams may dance where the pelican  
    plays,  
But naught of its dirge doth the woodland re-  
    lent.

Perchance in the wilds of the Maranon isle,  
Or far in the jungles of Congo or Nile,  
Lie phantasies hid which mankind never sees.  
But he who would learn of the Floridan's haunt,  
Or seek the sonata the cypresses chant,  
    May hear the weird anthem in every breeze.

## METEORS.

[Originally printed as "*Proem*" to **KALLIGO**.]

I SIT in the gloom  
Of my evening room  
On the hill-top high, and gaze on the tomb  
Of darkness which covers earth's beauty and  
bloom.

O'er the river's gray track  
Rise the hill-slopes black,—  
Like peddlers, each holding a house for a pack,—  
Or like Atlas of old, with the town on their  
back !

In the Northern sky,  
From their throne on high,  
Fair meteors flash on the wondering eye,  
And fall into darkness, and fail and die :

Fall suddenly down,  
With the gleam of a crown,  
To fade in the mists and the shadows brown  
Which hazily hang over Medford town!

The villagers sleep:  
Over valley and steep  
Not a household light breaks the darkness deep.—  
The pale stars only their vigils keep.

But look! through the night,  
(Where a meteor bright  
Just vanishing seemed to fall in its flight,)  
There shines in a window a warning light!—

A scintillant glare,  
Rich, luminous, rare,—  
As if when the meteor vanished in air  
It charmed a new star into radiance there!

—O soul of mine!  
When the Angel Divine

Shall summon thee swift to a region benign—  
Shall summon thee swift, and thou follow his sign,

Thou wouldest not ask more  
Than some heart on life's shore  
Grow bright with a gleam of thy vanishing lore—  
Grow bright with a lustre undreamed of before!

—  
SWEET-BRIER ROSES.

## I.

ONE morning, at a Poet's door,—  
Dark-curtained by a sycamore,—  
Came gently knocking  
(As of cradle rocking  
E'er so lightly on a sanded farm-house floor,)  
A fair-haired, thoughtful visitor—a lovely maiden.

As waiting at the door she stood,  
Her hands caressed in graceful mood  
    A bunch of posies—  
    Mostly Sweet-Brier Roses;  
By her discovered deep in yonder wood,  
And with sweetest summer fragrance redolently  
    laden.

## II.

“I bring them for the Poet, sir!”  
Such the maiden’s accents were;—  
    While so surprising  
    Were her words, that rising  
To his lips the Poet felt no answering stir.  
Yet bent he forward, fearful the sweet vision  
    losing.

“I bring them, sir,—the first this year,—  
In thanks for words of earnest cheer  
    By you bespoken!—  
    An unworthy token

They may seem, yet sprinkled are they by the  
tear  
Which joyful fled my eyes the while your verse  
perusing."

## III.

"Thou maiden fair!" the Bard replied,  
As he her grateful offering eyed,—  
"No praise e'er dearer  
To my heart came nearer  
Than these fragrant flowers thy tears have sanc-  
tified!  
Thine offering I accept with joy of great thanks-  
giving.

"One hope to human heart to bring,—  
One saddened soul to cause to sing,  
However lowly  
If in accents holy,—

This is greater crown than ever graced a king.  
Methinks for this alone one's life is worth the  
living.

## IV.

“Emblem of Sympathy, ’tis said,  
The Sweet-Brier Rose uplifts its head.—  
And for a mortal  
To approach the portal  
Of the human heart, and, listening, hear a tread  
Of sympathy in echo to his own, is greatest glory.

“And so, thou maiden, for these flowers  
I thank thee! They in weary hours  
Shall oft enchant me,  
And their memory haunt me  
Like remembrance of the Springtime’s welcome  
showers.  
Than this thy gift none greater e’er was known in  
song or story!”

## V.

—O Bard! thou hast not said in vain!—  
Than this the maiden’s glad refrain

Thy best endeavor  
Could from man nor ever  
Call a sweeter, grander, more mellifluous strain.  
One soul at least thy songs have led to Faith's  
glad fountain!

Nor greater praise e'er Poët had!  
Nor gold nor pearls could to it add!—  
More blest beatitude  
Of answering gratitude  
Could ne'er be whispered thee from heart made  
glad  
Through treading in thy footsteps up the Muses'  
Mountain.

1876.



## MOONLIGHT ON COLLEGE HILL.

MID-SUMMER, 1879.

THE hour is late:  
Borne up by the weight  
Of the sun as it sank through its western gate,  
The moon, compassionate, calm, sedate,

Has risen in glee  
From the eastern sea,—  
And now with the stars holds jubilee  
On the high wide floor of Immensity.

The light winds soar,  
Now higher, now lower:  
“Come hither,” they call to me, o'er and o'er,  
“And wander with us on the reservoir!”

I wander—and gaze;  
And the light wind plays

With the level waters, and shivers the rays  
That whirl on the surface like fugitive fays.

The undulant ground  
For miles around,—  
Rock, river, and valley, and meadow and mound,—  
Is lit by the moon with light profound.

Each star-ray stains  
A myriad vanes,  
And the moonlight gleams on the college panes  
Like dew on the grass after summer rains.

The river below  
Is white as snow,  
And over its tide, as the zephyrs blow,  
Broad ripples of silvery frost-work go.

Far down the stream,  
With a glow and gleam,  
The harbor shines, till its waters seem  
Like a jasper wall in a Patmian dream.

There bridges four,  
Time-shaken and hoar,  
Float trembling above the river's roar,  
And fade in the gloom of the farther shore.

There, too, go the ships  
Between the slips,  
With fire outborne from their blackened lips,  
Like dragons in some Apocalypse.

At the foot of the Hill,  
White, lonely, and still,—  
Its silence reëchoing, wild and shrill,  
The wail of the plaintive whip-poor-will,—

The powder-house stands,  
O'erlooking the lands  
Where Washington toiled with his patriot bands,  
And threw up redoubts with his own white hands.

And here is the road  
Where the steed once strode,—

The moon still gleaming as then it glowed  
Though the tide of a hundred years has flowed,—

On which Paul Revere,  
In hope and fear,  
Rode sounding aloud in the nation's ear  
The knell of the British grenadier!

In my walk I stay,  
And the scene survey  
With a startled eye! for I hear a sway  
As of hurrying hoof-beats far away!

But I listen again:  
And my ears attain  
No sound but the sudden and sad refrain,  
And the patter and splash, of summer rain:

As up from the west,  
At the storm's behest,  
Dark shadows rise wild o'er the landscape's breast,  
Blotting moon, river, harbor, and all the rest!

## BODY AND SPIRIT.

OCTOBER, 1881.

THE fair October sky is clear,  
The summer haze has fled;  
The glory of the woods is near,  
The maple's leaves are red.

The cloudless morning sun is mild,  
The fern its fragrance yields.  
"Come out into the woods, my child,  
Come out into the fields!"

'Tis thus I hear my mother speak,—  
My mother, Nature dear;  
And while her breezes fan my cheek  
I linger still to hear.

"These perfect days were never meant  
For toil of hand or brain,"—

But made to roam the continent,  
Or sail the misty main.

“The world is too much with us,”—Yea,  
For all men but a few  
Earth’s toil and strain from day to day  
Is life’s sole residue!

O God! for what the sun and sky?  
For what the leafy wood?  
Will men forever live and die,  
And call the worse the good?

But ah!—myself—*myself* am bound  
Within the city’s moil!  
I cannot break, *myself*, the round  
Of endless daily toil!

In vain the crimson sumach rears  
For me its plumes of red.  
And while I toil,—’mid blinding tears,—  
The aster’s gold is dead!

Ah well ! my mind is still my own ;  
My heart no fetters gyve :  
My soul is monarch of a throne  
Which through all years shall thrive.

To toil my body Fate may urge —  
But unconfined and free  
My spirit roams the mountain's verge,  
And sails the sun-lit sea.

---

#### MYSTIC RIVER.

O MINIATURE river ! winding free  
Through widening meadows to wider sea,  
Beautiful, beautiful art thou to me !

Men look on thy narrow wave, and laugh!.....  
Little they know of the cup I quaff!  
And what carest thou for their idle chaff?

Thou art narrow, and sluggish, and muddy oft,  
And thy margin is oozy, and low, and soft;  
It is no wonder that men have scoffed:

For men are thoughtless, through and through;  
And men are idle and sluggish too,  
And they laugh at themselves when they laugh  
at you.

Thou art wider at times—when the upward tide  
Brings a torrent of brine from the ocean's side,  
And seaweed and kelp on thy current glide.

Then pleasure-barks on thy surface float;  
And fair lips wreath into joyous note  
While fair hands hasten each onward boat.

Thou art wider still—when the tide comes in  
With a rush and a roar from the sea, and a din  
Like that on the beach when the storms begin.

Then over thy wave the sea-gull dips,  
And screams to his fellows, while slowly drips  
The salt sea-spray from his pinions' tips!

And thou takest thy birth in lakes that are large,  
With villages fair on their prosperous marge,—  
And yet almost as lone as when swept by the  
barge

Of the Indian hunters now lying asleep  
Where the willow bends low and the larches weep  
On the westering slopes of Walnut steep;—

In lakes that are quiet and calm and still,  
Where the bobolink's laugh and the mavis' trill  
Reëcho o'er forest and meadow and hill.

But river! if thou in thy breadth wert as great  
As the Stream of the South where it pours through  
the gate

Of golden Brazil, and runs separate

For leagues in the brine, ever fresh, ever pure;  
If thou in precipitous depths didst endure  
Dark caverns and cliffs such as oceans immure;

If thou in the circling embrace of thy banks  
Held gardens by hundreds, and castles in ranks,  
And vineyards like those in the land of the  
Frances ;

If thou with Euphrates and Gihon didst run  
By the Garden of God, and didst mirror the sun  
As when first over Eden the dawn had begun ;—

Ev'n then thou couldst never peace richer impart,  
Nor ever be dearer, O stream, in my heart,  
Than thou in thy slumber and sluggishness art !

For sacred to me, doubly, trebly, thy tide,  
For the friends now far-sundered and scattered  
world-wide  
With whom in my youth I have walked by thy  
side !



## BODILY WEARINESS.

[ON MY BIRTHDAY.]

THE sun is in the eastern sky,  
But I have journeyed far;  
And though not yet the dew is dry  
Or pale the morning star,  
Already, O my weary feet,  
Ye faint for home and rest!  
Already, in the morning street,  
Ye look with longing west!

Above in yonder ether floats  
The waning crescent's gold;  
Around me are the plaintive notes  
The robins sang of old.  
The sun will quench the lunar ray,  
The noon will hush the song:

Such borrowed light seems mine to-day,  
Such notes to me belong.

I dreamed till now the world was wide;  
Its wealth I thought to win.  
But rivers roll on every side,  
And mountains hem me in.  
Like Rasselas, I pine for air;  
The valley range is small;  
And shallow fissure here or there  
Reveals the rocky wall.

I may not in the flesh ascend,—  
We have not wings to fly:  
But overhead blue arches bend,  
The iris spans the sky.  
Full soon, full soon, O fainting feet,  
Ye pant no more for rest!  
To-morrow, in the twilight street,  
Ye turn to wander west!

## THE VIOLET.

[Written immediately on awaking from a dream during which it seemed to me that I talked with the poet Wordsworth as he was when a young man.]

I MET within the wilding wood  
A violet nodding in a dell:  
Its bud was blue, its stalk was green;  
And now when I would tell  
The story of that simple flower  
There rises to my view  
A perfect picture of the scene,—  
The nodding violet's stalk of green,  
Its flower of lovely blue.  
In all the world were never seen  
A bluer blue, a greener green.

I met within the city street  
A darling little blue-eyed girl:  
Her eye was bright, her step was light,  
And on her brow a curl

Of fairest, purest gold hung free.  
With smiles she looked at me!  
Her heart, dear girl! was light as air,  
As free as air from sorrow. There  
Could never, surely, be  
A step more light, an eye more blue,  
A soul more innocent or true.

A few short days—alas! alas!  
I met her in the street no more.  
I know not how it came to pass,  
But knocking at my door  
One evening, as I writing sat,  
Approached a little boy,—  
Her brother,—who beside my knee  
Bewailed and wept so piteously,  
That it would needs employ  
A power beyond my tenderest art  
To hush the turbulence of his heart.

I clasped him in my close embrace;  
His burning cheeks with tears were wet.  
To mine he raised his mournful face,—  
Ah! ne'er shall I forget

The hope, the doubt, the keen despair  
That mantled in his eye.  
“O sir!” I hear him importune,—  
“Dear sir! she will be better soon!  
Tell me she will not die!”  
My heart could not deny the boon:—  
“Ah yes!” I said,.....“be better soon.”

— I hastened to the wilding wood,  
And sought the violet in the dell,  
Whose bud was blue, whose stalk was green.

I hardly need to tell  
Upon whose breast, within whose hand,  
The flower was shortly seen.  
She on its petals looked, and smiled;  
Upon the bud of blue, poor child!  
And on the stalk of green.  
And then she closed her bright blue eyes,  
And flew afar to Paradise.

Upon her breast, within her hand,  
The violet still was seen,—  
The violet with its bud of blue,  
Its stalk of brilliant green,—

When in her little grave she lay.  
I doubt not when in love  
The angels met her, and her eyes  
Beheld the blooms of Paradise,  
Were none more fair above!  
Nor there in heaven might angels view  
A soul than hers more pure and true.

---

"I DREAMED LAST NIGHT I WAS  
A BOY."

I DREAMED last night I was a boy!—  
A happy, daring boy again!  
Sharing the wanderings, the wild joy  
Of old companions!—all who now are men.

Perfect the picture seemed to me,—  
The wide-roofed house of Gothic build,

“The Island,” and “The old Oak-Tree,”  
The widening forest, hare and partridge-filled.

Charlie and Walter, Albert, Frank,—  
All were at hand,—and with them, I !  
Sporting beside the well, where drank  
Many a traveler as he went by.

How well I recognized the hat !  
The striped trousers, soiled and torn !  
Wherein, within my dream, I sat,  
And whistled cheerily to greet the morn !

My hair hung white upon my brow :  
I felt its tangled flaxen skein.—  
'Tis darker, thicker, browner, now ;  
But ah ! how soon it may be white again !

We romped, it seemed to me, for hours ;  
And then . . . . for home ! full boisterous !  
Bearing a bunch of wilding flowers  
For HER, God bless her ! who was All to us !

The house was large and wide; a wing  
Ran out into the orchard-blooms.—  
Plenty of space for rollicking  
Within those high, wide, memory-sacred rooms!

Upon the table now there stood  
A basket of ripe red-cheeked fruit.  
Ah no! in city habitude  
Such apples ne'er have gratified my suit!

As I their luscious tints recall,  
And with them buds and murmuring bees,  
Upon my heart there seems to fall  
A vision fair—as of Hesperides!

Again I walk the dreamy maze  
Where clovers bloom beneath the trees;  
And dreams of boyhood's buried days  
Recall glad visions of life's earlier ease.

Yet never doth my heart repine,  
Or mourn the loss of vanished years.

Still brightly, all along the line,  
Some glad aureola of light appears.

I hold it is not true with all  
That boyhood's days are happiest:  
Faith, Hope and Love ne'er cease to call,  
And to the wise each present year is best.

Ah no, my boyhood! back again  
I would not call thee if I might.—  
Yet, solace for a weary brain!  
Thou mayest come back to me in dreams of  
night!

Yet ev'n in sleep to me it seemed  
The pleasure still was tinged with pain.  
So, waking, I thanked God I dreamed,  
And rose with joy to manhood's toil again.

BOSTON, 1880.



## R H O B E.

## PROEM.

THE key-note of the soul,—  
Whether of broken heart or whole,  
Whether of sinner upon earth  
    Or saint in heaven ;  
Of him of lowly birth,  
    Or him to whom 'tis given  
To unlock the mystery above,—  
The key-note of the soul is Love.

Thus is the tale I bring,  
Thus is the unrhymed song I sing,  
A tale, a symphony of Love :  
    Though blue waves deep  
Roll now where the lovers throve,  
    And seaweeds shivering weep  
Along the strands and islet shores,  
While echoing the loud Ocean roars.

## PART FIRST.

ON the bosom of a mild and placid river,  
On the surface of the Kennebec's slow current,  
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,  
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,  
Sailed the jaunty little sloop, the Little Ella.

Happy burden bore the bark o'er the billows,—  
Happy bark, such a burden to be bearing!  
For the hand upon the helm of the vessel  
Was the hand of a maiden rare and lovely,—  
Of the maiden called the Queen of all the River.

Lightsome heart is thine own, O merry maiden,  
As thou singest in thy sailing o'er the waters!  
Happy thoughts are thine own, lovely Rhobe,  
As thou thinkest of thy lover over yonder,  
As thou singest of his love and adoration!

Shall we listen, Rhobe? shall we hear thine anthem?—  
O that ours the madrigal, and we thine Albin!

O that love like thine, that true regard like  
Rhobe's,  
Had of old enchain'd men's hearts in garlands  
golden,  
That the world ere this had rightly known what  
Love is!

---

## SONG.

## “WHEN YOUNG HEARTS LOVE.”

BRIGHT are earth's days, and glad earth's years,  
When young hearts love !  
Many are joys, and few are fears,  
When young hearts love !  
Nor aught the wide earth round,  
Unto its farthest bound,  
May equal the intense  
Unswerving vehemence  
Of faith, of truth, of innocence, of tears,  
When young hearts love !

Glad are the songs the angels sing,  
In realms above !  
Merry the mock-bird's carolling,  
In southern grove !  
But ne'er may seraph chant  
The Song of Covenant  
That bindeth twain in one,  
Or bird of southern sun  
Repeat the soul's glad triumphing,  
When young hearts love !

---

On the mast the folds of canvas, idly rustling,  
Murmured gladly an accompanying music  
To the words the maiden's ecstasy had uttered :  
Gurgling softly where the boat-keel cut the water,  
Ocean's bosom gladly throbbed an answering echo.

Lightsome heart indeed is thine, O merry maiden,  
As thou singest in thy sailing o'er the waters !  
Happy thoughts in truth are thine, lovely Rhobe,  
As thou thinkest of thy lover over yonder,  
As thou singest of his love and adoration.

But why sailest thou so early in the morning?  
Wherefore driftest thou so aimless on the current?  
Whither floatest thou so idly on the waters?—  
Look to Eastward! thou shalt see the fair Aurora  
Now herself but just arising from the billows!

Hast thou come in all the fullness of thy beauty  
To seek conquest o'er the Goddess of the Morn-  
ing?—

In thy consciousness of youthful charms and  
graces,  
Dost thou bring thy truth and innocence and  
beauty  
To be rivals with the splendors of Aurora?

Needless, Rhobe! more than needless, is thy  
coming,

If perchance be these thy thoughts and aspir-  
ations!

For Aurora is but servant to thy wishes;—  
And ev'n now descends she with her rosy fingers  
To inweave glad sunbeams through thy golden  
tresses!

Never thoughts so vain as these, however, Rhobe,  
Find a lodgment in thy heart's most secret cham-  
bers:

For though rare thy beauty, 'tis by thee unthought  
of!

And thrice beautiful that maid in others' vision  
Who herself of loveliness is all unconscious.

Trebly beautiful, in manhood's estimation,  
Is the maiden who to natural adornments  
Strives to add true purity and grace of spirit:  
Who to loveliness of person and of features  
Adds the glory of true womanly devotion!

And moreover, Rhobe, though thy charms were  
many,—

Though thy presence far outrivaled Aphroditë  
And outshone the splendors of historic Helen,  
If thy heart's endeavor were not high and holy  
All thine outward semblance would but be as  
nothing.

For methinks that high nobility of nature,  
And a soul possessed of simplest charms of Virtue,

And a heart oft swayed by Sympathy's emotion,  
Are far lovelier, diviner, greatly grander  
Than could haughtiest Beauty e'er alone attain to.

— But why sailest thou so early in the morning?  
Wherfore driftest thou so aimless on the current?  
Whither floatest thou so idly on the waters? —  
Look to Eastward! thou shalt see the fair Aurora  
Now herself but just arising from the billows!

Turn thine eyes, thou lovely Rhobe, to the Eastward:

Watch the fast declining shadows of the darkness;

Bend thy gaze to yon transparent mass of ether;  
Mark the purple-blazoned arches of the Morning;  
See the yonder golden gleamings of the sunshine.

Gaze where strikes the growing glare upon the waters;

Watch the gradual lighting up of the horizon;  
See where rises yonder rock above the billows;

Mark the shifting, snow-white plumage of the  
yachtsmen;—

Turn thine eyes, thou lovely Rhobe, to the East-  
ward!

But the maiden looks nor glances east nor west-  
ward;

All the glories of the dawn she counts as nothing!  
Rapt and earnest is the phase upon her features,  
As of mortals straining eyes to sights celestial:  
And a steady gaze of rapture sends she South-  
ward.

Speak, thou modest river maiden,—speak and  
tell us!

What canst see thou there upon the distant ocean?  
Whither pointed is thy look of rare affection?  
Where directed is thine eye so true and tender?  
Dost thou gaze at sights of earth—or sights of  
heaven!

Ah, thou Rhobe! 'tis yon high-uplifted light-  
house!—

'Tis the lofty tower of yonder brilliant beacon  
That engages every glance and gaze thou givest!  
Yonder islet, on the edge of the Atlantic,  
Has for thee far greater charms than fair Aurora!

Blush not, Rhobe! thou art watching for thy  
lover!—  
Miles beyond thee, down the current of the  
river,  
At his lonely watch upon the edge of Ocean,  
Stands this moment, o'er the billows wide out-  
gazing,  
One who dearer is to thee than any other.

In that pile of massive masonry high builded,  
Stands he there unseen within his lofty tower;—  
With his finger on the wick of the great lantern  
Waits he for the first bright golden gleam of sun-  
shine  
Which shall flash above the distant gray horizon!

Well thou knowest this, thou fairy maiden sailor!—  
Well thou knowest that at sunrise in the morning,

When the glowing East shall flame with daylight's  
coming,

Doth thy lover climb the spiral iron stairway  
To extinguish then the radiant lighthouse beacon.

And for this thou sailest early in the morning !  
Yea, for this thou driftest aimless on the current  
Ere as yet Aurora rises from the billows !—  
That, unseen thyself, thou still mayst gaze to  
seaward,  
And within yon fading beacon-fire discern thy  
lover !

O devotion rare and wondrous is the maiden's !  
Greater love for lover ne'er had woman, Rhobe,  
Than the love thou manifestest for thine Albin.  
Rest assured that Angels know thy consecration  
And shall bear him on their wings in faithful  
keeping !

---

## INTERLUDE.

“ ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS ? ”

OH, the air is full of beings,  
Unbeknown to mortal ken ;  
And amid Life’s strange decreeings  
They are laboring hard for men.

Hither fly they, hither, hither,  
Though no mortal eye perceive ;  
And their toil, or hither, thither,  
Is to comfort souls who grieve.

Ministering spirits are they,  
Sent to minister to men ;  
And his darkened eyes unbar they  
That Heaven’s light may enter in.

Oil of gladness for his mourning  
’Tis their mission to bestow,  
And, his tattered robes adorning,  
Turn the crimson into snow !

Beauty they bestow for ashes,  
And a wreathèd laurel hold,  
Which 'mid Life's electric flashes  
Bids the faltering one "Be bold!"

On their wings they upward bear him,  
Lest perchance his steps should slide ;  
Oft from hidden danger tear him  
Till the threatening sea subside.

In his ear they counsel gladly,  
Till his poignant sorrow cease ;  
And when waters whirl him madly  
Gently whisper words of peace.

Oh, the air is full of beings,  
Unbeknown to mortal ken :  
And amid Life's strange decreeings  
They are laboring hard for men.

---

Ministering spirits, Rhobe! — they are whispering;  
They are whispering in thine ear, and calling,  
calling;

They are murmuring of the wild Atlantic's waters;  
They are breathing, they are echoing, “Albin!  
Albin!” —

And they bear him on their wings in faithful keep-  
ing.

— But extinguished now the beacon,—and thy  
lover,

To thine eager eye invisible and distant,  
Slowly draws the sliding curtains of his lantern  
To protect it from the golden glare of morn-  
ing,—

To enshield its bright reflectors from the sun-  
shine.

Ere descending, stands he motionless a moment,  
Raptly gazing on his brightly burnished lantern,  
On his fairy-hued, prismatic-tinted darling! —  
For reflected in its sympathetic circles  
Sees he ever there the mystic gaze of Rhobe!

As he thinks upon the modest river maiden,  
As he ponders o'er her faith and true devotion,  
Steps he gayly to the massive plated window,—  
Flings e'en now a glance of love from out his  
eyrie,—

Up the river, up the Kennebec's slow current.

Doth the youthful lighthouse-keeper least imagine  
That fair Rhobe sails so early in the morning?—  
Is he drawn by any subtile sense magnetic,  
Any power profound of marvelous intuition,  
To suppose she floats so early on the waters?

Who can answer!—yet along the river's margin  
Wide he gazes with a glance of strange emotion:

Gazes upward o'er the Kennebec's wide waters,  
Up to yonder cosey cottage in the distance,—  
Yonder home where lives the modest river maiden!

Naught however sees he there or recognizes,—  
Naught in answer to his gaze of fond affection:  
For too indistinct the cottage, and too distant,

And too indistinct the yacht the Little Ella,  
To be seen from out the tower of Albin's light-  
house.

So without a single gleam of recognition,  
And without a single sight of aught familiar  
(Save the nearer panorama of the river,  
Save the coastline and the wide expanse of  
Ocean,)

Draws he once again the curtain of his tower.

And extinguished now the beacon ; and the maid-  
en,

From her scene of observation up the river  
Had beheld and watched its sudden declination ; —  
And in voice of tender faith and true devotion  
Did the burden of her thoughts find glad ex-  
pression :

“O my Albin ! my belovèd !” cried the maiden ;  
“Thou my hope and star of promise for the  
future !

I indeed have gladly sailed upon the river,

And have sailed ere yet there came the gleam  
of morning,  
To behold thy distant presence in the beacon !

“God be with thee in thy solitude, my Albin,  
And his angels from the breath of harm preserve  
thee !  
Be thy voyage o'er life's sea a voyage holy ;  
Be thy guide the glorious rays of Bethlehem's  
starlight ;  
Be at last the eternal port of Heaven thy haven !

“May the Hand that holds earth's firmament, my  
Albin,  
And who lights the glittering beacon-fires above  
us,  
Grant that never, like thy radiant light-house  
warning,  
Shall thy noble life go out in utter darkness,  
Or be spent, ere comes the dawn of the eternal  
Morning !

“And my Albin, if perchance thou now mightst  
hear me,

List I pray thee to the prayer to Heaven I utter:  
That when finally may come to thee the summons  
Which shall call thee to the land of the Here-  
after,

Not alone thy feet may tread the verge eternal!—

“Separated never, during life’s ascendant;  
Separated never, when the grave would part us!  
Arm in arm entwined, the when the Bridegroom  
calleth;  
Heart to heart enchained, in life’s fast final throb-  
bings;  
Hand in hand tight held, nor ever more to sun-  
der!”

..... And still, upon the bosom of the river,  
On the surface of the Kennebec’s slow current,  
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,  
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,  
Sailed the jaunty little sloop, the Little Ella.

## PART SECOND.

WHILE ablaze above the watery waste of Ocean  
Rose the bright-orbed God of Day, the Sun of  
    splendor,  
Bringing here a new-born life of light and glad-  
    ness,  
On the world the other side of the horizon  
Slow descended the gray shadows of the Evening.

Thus the while in darkness half the earth lies  
    sleeping,  
And the while in blackness half the earth lies  
    groping,  
All the rest awakes to joyful songs of labor,  
Rises up to seek pursuit of wealth and honor,  
Rises up to utter hymns of glad thanksgiving.

And 'tis thus that while a half earth's population  
Is content to sit in listless mental shadow  
And to creep in paths of moral degradation,

The remainder with a gladsome exultation  
Gains the lofty heights of Wisdom's holy mount-  
ains!

—Now ablaze along the margin of the river,  
All along the pine-clad Kennebec's green edges,  
Glowed the tree-tops with the golden glare of  
morning,  
Glowed the hill-tops with the mellow yellow sun-  
shine,  
With the purple-tinted radiance of Aurora.

With the rising of the sun above the waters,  
With the fleeing of the filmy mists of morning,  
Came a steady freshening breeze from up the  
Southward:

O'er the surface of the slowly-rippling river  
Came a gentle undulation from the Ocean.

Swift the sails of all the ships on the Atlantic,—  
All the burdened barks bound home from distant  
commerce,

With their heavy laden freights from foreign markets  
And their holy wealth of human hearts by hundreds,  
Bowed their heads to meet the breezes' benediction.

Swift the sails of all the ships from home departing,—  
Ships with products of the field and of the forest,  
Ships with golden stores of high-piled Western harvests  
For the life and strength and nourishment of nations,  
Felt the breeze and bowed their heads to the Atlantic.

Fast the fishing-boats from many a homely harbor,  
And the schooners for the Grand Banks of Newfoundland,  
And the white-robed yachts of Wealth's gay usurpation,

Felt alike with joy the air's glad ministration,  
And to greet the breeze flung out their clouds  
of canvas.

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[At this point, as the present poem was originally written, were inserted the lines "WHITHER, YE STATELY SHIPS?" found in the earlier pages of this book. In the design of the whole volume, the author deemed it wise to give the stanzas mentioned a separate position. They may, however, if the reader desires, be noted in this connection.]

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With the rising of the sun above the waters,  
With the fleeing of the filmy mists of morning,  
Came a steady freshening breeze from up the  
Southward:  
O'er the surface of the slowly-rippling river  
Came a gentle undulation from the Ocean.

Homeward steering now, and fast the waves o'er-  
flying,  
Rode the fairy maid, the Queen of all the River:

Far behind her lay the distant lighthouse-beacon,—  
Far behind her on the edge of the Atlantic:  
And before her rose the island shores of George-  
town.

Long and low, and thickly crowned at times with  
verdure,  
Were the shores where Rhobe steered the Little  
Ella:  
And anon a gentle hillside, hemlock burdened,  
And anon a grassy slope or stretch of meadow  
Met her gaze as home she sailed along the river.

Freely dotted 'mid the foliage of the landscape  
Fast appeared to her full many a home familiar:  
For well-known and highly loved in all the island,  
All along the river's varied panorama,  
Was the fairy maiden sailor, lovely Rhobe.

Yet nor stayed she now upon her upward journey,  
Though assured of honest, earnest, hearty welcome,  
To revisit friends or meet their kindly greeting;

Homeward now, to her own father's cosey cottage.  
To her household duties, was she fast returning.

As she onward sped, so early, o'er the waters,  
The whole earth around seemed filled with peace  
and gladness,  
And with holiest acclamations of thanksgiving.  
As she sailed, she heard from wave and wood  
and meadow,  
Constant rising, hymns of praise to the Immortal.

The wide earth's inhabitants, with Morn awaking,  
Man and beast and bird, alike in joyous transport,  
With united song beholding the bright Sun's up-  
rising,  
And the fleeing of Night's sable shades and  
shadows,  
Raised with one accord their hymns to the Im-  
mortal.

All around her Rhobe heard the songs arising;  
All around she heard the symphony of Nature:  
In the rippling of the wave and rush of waters,

In the verdant meadows and the sighing zephyrs,  
In the rustling woodlands and primeval forests.

In yon distant dooryard, with a din unrivaled,  
Rose the crow and cackle of the fowls, and with  
them

The reverberating notes of lordly gobblers.  
Sheep and lambs amid the hedges playful gam-  
boled,  
With a tender, plaintive, melancholy bleating.

On their way to pasture the responsive lowing  
Of the kine made sober chorus to the neighing  
Of the prancing horses. Innocently frisking  
In the path, while slow their soberer elders  
cropped the  
Springing verdure, the young calves made sport  
like children.

On the lawn, and 'mid the widening meadow,  
loudly,  
And anon with delicate reverberation,

Chirped and whirred the cricket; and with whirl  
and buzzing  
In the air, his flight erratic and uncertain,  
Lazily the droning fly drummed on the ceiling.

Far away, upon a distant spruce-top, mocking  
With a dolorous cry his young and sprightlier  
brethren,—  
Cawing with a continuous lamentation,—  
Solitary screamed the patriarch crow of George-  
town,  
Mourning buried days and long past depredations.

A few sea-fowl, soaring high above the river,  
Following the current to the edge of Ocean,  
Sent to earth a cry of weirdly wild foreboding,—  
As expectant of the cruel whirl of waters  
Where the gunner's aim should bring them, blind  
and bleeding.

Gayly in the trees, or from the wilding thicket,  
The red-bosomed pilferer of the ripening cherries

Made the field-bound farmer fair remuneration  
For the feast by trilling him a glad "Good-  
morrow!"

While a myriad voices echoed, "Glad good-  
morrow!"

Thus around her Rhobe heard the songs arising;  
All around she heard the symphony of Nature:  
In the rippling of the wave and rush of waters,  
In the verdant meadows and the sighing zephyrs,  
In the rustling woodlands and primeval forests.

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[This poem was written very early, being one of the writer's first compositions in verse. In reviewing the manuscript for these pages, after the lapse of the four or five years since its production, the author is led to deem the peculiar versification one of increasing monotony, and much of the narrative itself of inferior interest. Accordingly he has felt it wise to omit, at this point in the story, many pages. The poem was the result of two Summers' personal experience amid the scenes described; and the delightful shores and summits of the Kennebec, the Sheepscot, and their confluent streams, were pictured in the poem at no inconsiderable length. The verses which have already been given (notwithstanding their frequent betrayal of the

author's boyish ardor and inexperience) are sufficiently fresh, it is hoped, and present incidents and scenes of sufficient interest, to repay perusal. Below will be found the conclusion of the poem as it was originally designed. The following brief summary of the intervening portions will enable the reader to resume the narrative intelligently :

Arriving at her island home, Rhobe (the name is pronounced in two syllables) discovers that the early morning has brought to her father's cottage a visitor, in the person of Margie, Albin's sister. Margie comes to invite Rhobe to her own home for a week, where Albin himself is to be for that length of time,—he having happily secured the mentioned respite from his lonely lighthouse labors, through the intervention of a friend who had volunteered to assume his responsible duties during the interval. Early on the following morning the two maidens sail together to the rocky island at the mouth of the river, to bring the brother and lover to his home.

It is during the succeeding week of holidays that the incidents occur, and that the scenes are visited, described in the omitted portions of the poem. Not being necessary to an understanding of the poem's conclusion, no summary of the daily river-excursions is here given.

On the last day of the seven, a little fleet of sail-boats, containing in all a party of twenty or more young people, leaves shore for a day's sail along the coast. In the Little Ella are only Rhobe and her lover, Margie being in another boat. Premonitions of a storm arising, the fleet puts about, in the middle of the afternoon, but is delayed for hours by contrary winds. At nightfall, despairing of reaching the mouth of the river before the rise of the tempest, Albin signals the fleet to enter a nearer harbor, where all arrive safe. Albin himself, however, urged by some premonition of disaster, resolves to push on.

He is accompanied by Rhobe, she having refused to be put on board one of the shore-bound yachts,—if indeed such a transfer to another boat had been possible for her in the rising sea. Darkness now falls, and the storm almost immediately descends with great fury, the boat being many times nearly engulfed. An hour later, rounding after many unsuccessful attempts the point of an intervening island, Albin discovers, to his dismay, that his light is not lit, although the sun has long sunk and the storm is furious. Urged doubly now, the Little Ella, with Albin at the bow as lookout, and with Rhobe at the helm, steers straight for the light. It is at this point in the story that the original verses are resumed.]

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PART THIRD.

ONWARD through the darkness, through the spray  
fast-flying,  
Onward, shivering, trembling, leaping through the  
billows,  
Onward to the black gigantic bulk before them,  
To the foam-enshrouded, rock-surrounded island,  
Sped, with storm-sent haste, the sloop the Little  
Ella.

Rough the breaking billows here, in calmest weather;  
Black these sunken ledges, when the sea is smiling;  
Difficult the landing, in the cheeriest daylight:  
What shall save the maiden, what shall save the lover,  
When upon the shore the surge shall bear the shallop!

Skill shall save, and courage. Well the light-house-keeper  
Knows each sunken rock, each sea and shore-ward current;—  
Peering o'er the bowsprit, peering through the darkness,  
Guided by the waters roaring on the ledges,  
Calls he momently to Rhobe, “Port,” or “Starboard.”

To the little stretch of beach piled soft with seaweed,—  
To the only stretch of beach on all the island,

Hardly six short boat-lengths wide, and edged  
by breakers,—  
Through the blinding, hurrying, howling whirl of  
waters,  
Rhobe steered the little sloop, the Little Ella.

Ah ! the undertow is striving like a giant,—  
Like a demon of the sea, with velvet fingers,  
With a soft and sinuous touch alluring to him  
The light pebbles on the beach and the long  
seaweed,—  
Then down-dragging them with shriek of terrible  
laughter.

And the wind—the wind is howling through the  
cordage,  
And the sail, though trebly reefed, is torn and  
ribboned,  
And the boat, careering wildly, dips the current  
Till its rail is inches deep beneath the water,—  
Till its keel is raised to view of the wild sea-  
gulls !

....."Safe!" said Albin, smiling. "Safe!" said Rhobe, leaping

From the shallop to the waiting arms held open;  
For the demon of the sea had missed the moment,—

Had hurled high on the soft beach the boat uninjured,

And slunk back with scream of baffled rage and envy.

Up the rocky pathway, now, the lighthouse-keeper,

Stumbling in the darkness over slippery seaweed,  
Over loosened stones and timbers, which the storm-wind

In its fury had flung wide athwart the hill-slope,  
Hastened with fleet eager footsteps to the tower.

Tying the sloop's hawser first to a huge boulder,  
Hastened Rhobe also, after him, to aid him,  
Choosing for her upward path a gentler passage  
Than the bold precipitous ascent which Albin  
In his sturdy might athletic had selected.

Up a narrow winding path o'erhung by beeches,  
And by thick dwarfed spruce-trees bordered,  
firmly planted

In the niches of high jagged rocks, age-shattered,  
Sped the maiden—till, when half way up the  
hill-slope,

Suddenly she heard a cry of pain—a moaning.

Oft with wonder, mingled with a tinge of terror,  
Had the maiden, in her visits to the island,  
Viewed high-towering here a mass of crumbling  
granite,

Tipt with shattered pine-trunks,—trembling,—  
wide o'er-hanging

All the pathway,—waiting, waiting to plunge  
downward.

And the storms had howled about it, and the  
whirlwinds

Had encompassed it, and rains had on it fallen,  
Till at last—at last it sundered, and in fragments,  
While the tempest thundered, broke from its  
foundations,—

And across the path now shattered lay and ruined.

And imprisoned underneath the waste and rubbish,—

Struck down suddenly, and caught and held, half buried,

Hours before, in climbing upward from the landing To the granite tower to light and tend the beacon,—

Lay the friend whose kindly aid had favored Albin.

“Haste thee!—wait not, Rhobe!” said he,—for the maiden,

Hearing the faint moan beneath the pile, had spoken,

Asking who was there, and how she in the darkness,

And alone, the best might aid him? And he answered:

“Mind not me! but haste thee, Rhobe,—fire the beacon!”

“Nay, for Albin is at hand,” replied the maiden.  
“He is at the tower ev’n now—and ah! thank  
Heaven!  
Yonder, flashes out this moment, o’er the island,  
The bright warning message of the lantern!  
Like to  
Bethlehem’s starlight be this beacon to the  
sailor!”

Then, with ready hand and gentle, Rhobe la-  
bored,—  
With a rapid skill the fallen man releasing,—  
Rolling back the broken boulders and the pine-  
trunks  
Till he stood beside her, upright, little injured.  
From the dead weight of the rocks the trees had  
saved him.

So together upward,—on her arm he leaning,—  
Strove they through the raging storm to reach  
the tower.  
All was blackness o’er the wide slope of the  
island;

All was hurrying spray and cloud-rack on the waters,

Save where feebly shone the bright track of the lantern.

“A most fearful night!” said Albin, as they met him.

“Ay! a night indeed!” said Walter, while with wonder

Albin listened to his tale, as he recounted  
How the jutting crag had fallen, and how Rhobe—  
“Bless her heart heroic!” cried he—had released him.

.....“See how flares the lurid lightning in the offing!

How the roaring, turbid waters are illumined  
By the sudden zig-zag flashes!” whispered Albin.—

“Gracious God!” he cried. “Yon brig! why comes she hither!

See where heads she for the reef!—what power can save her!

“I must go!” he cried. “See, she is drifting heedless.

There is time—I can sail out and intercept her!  
Fools!—nay, nay, the fault is mine! for had the beacon

Been aflame ere yet they drifted near the island—  
Had I been upon my post—they had not perished.

“Knowing not the sunken reef to which they hasten,

They lie still, with folded arms, and wait and linger,  
Daring not to spread a yard of sail, lest haply  
To the very death they fly, to which, unthought of,  
While they linger, crying ‘We are safe,’ they hurry!

“I must go!....Nay, Rhobe, with thine eyes beseeching,

Look not thou, my love, so wild at me, remorseful!....

“O my Albin!” cried the maiden. “Wild the waters!

Never from the shore can you succeed in pushing.  
And your little boat in such a sea will perish.”

“Ah! but better, Rhobe,—trebly better were it  
When calls Duty, sternest voice of God or Nature,  
Ev’n to perish, than to fail in the fulfilling!  
Bid me go—see! half a hundred souls may  
perish:  
You and I are two!”.....“Ah God! but if we  
sunder!—

“If we sunder,” moaned the maiden, “what is  
left me?  
Two? nay, *one* are we! one only, and forever!  
O my Albin! my belovèd!” cried the maiden;  
“If we sunder—if we sunder, what is left me?  
But the vessel dies! Go! God be with you,  
Albin!”

So he left them. And a moment, while they  
listened,  
Bending eagerly, they heard his flying footsteps  
As he hastened down the rocky seaward terrace.  
Then the roar of the wild tempest shook the  
tower,  
And naught heard they but the long roll of the  
breakers.

But the next flash of the lightning, streaming  
seaward,  
Showed them Albin in his own light life-boat,  
rowing,  
Toiling outward, with bare mast, to where the  
drifting,  
Helpless vessel, hid from view in the dense  
blackness,  
Lay in danger. And they feared to look upon  
him.

“O my Albin! my belovèd!” cried the maiden;  
“Thou my hope and star of promise for the  
future!”  
And no word of prayer, no other thought, she  
murmured,  
Than the sad refrain, “My Albin, O my Albin,  
If we sunder—if we sunder, what is left me!”

Then she thought of the swift-coming, happy  
Autumn,  
When no more through all the long, cold, cruel  
Winter

Should the lighthouse-keeper tend the gleaming  
lantern—

When they two together, in their own snug cottage  
On the mainland, would live warm and calm and  
happy.

And her thoughts ran down the coming years,  
swift-fleeting,

Which should bring to them prosperity and  
children—

Smiling acres, crowned with rich, abundant har-  
vests,

And fresh fair young beaming faces, radiant,  
golden:

Dreamed she even now she heard their innocent  
prattle!

“Ah,—my God! Stand back! stand back!” cried  
Walter, seizing

And with stern grasp forcing far-off from the  
window

The pale maiden. For a blinding flash—long-  
streaming

And intense—had showed him where the little  
life-boat,  
By a swift wave overturned, floated keel upward!

But the maid escaped him. To the window hastening,  
Saw she, as the radiance died, the deed of ruin.  
“On the brig they had just sighted him,” cried  
Walter,  
“And obeying his alarm had veered to South-  
ward,—  
When the mad wave, hurrying onward, overturned  
him.”

“He is safe!” cried Rhobe, watching from the  
window  
Till another gleam shot far athwart the waters.  
“He has risen from the waves, and strongly battling  
With the billows gains a hold upon the life-boat,  
And is floating now upon the o’erturned shallop.

“But they see him not, nor hear him!” cried the  
maiden.  
“In the darkness they have fled away and left him!

O my Albin! thou didst risk thy life to save them—  
Shall not I—O willingly!—now dare the tempest,  
Thee to rescue, in the sloop the Little Ella?"

"Nay,—but Rhobe!" Walter cried, and had detained her:

But she would not listen. "Guard the lantern,  
Walter!

See that it burns bright, nor let it ever flicker.  
Safe full soon will he and I again together  
Come to land—or hand in hand together perish!"

Then she vanished out of sight, and the dull  
booming  
Of the tempest, and the thunder of the breakers,  
And the shriek of the wild waves upon the  
pebbles,  
And the scream, shrill, sharp and piercing, of the  
curlew,  
Were the only sounds that met the ear of Walter.

Stood he dazed a moment, speechless. Downward  
swooping

With swift pinion,— madly swooping,— screaming,—  
calling,—

Dashed three sea-birds, wild, against the alluring  
beacon :

Hard against the massive windows: then with  
broken,

Shattered pinions, and dull pain-cries, fell they  
fainting !

Dimly through the brain of Walter passed a vision.  
“Love is a strong beacon,” said he, “and alluring;  
And on pinions eager as the hurrying sea-bird,  
And as thoughtless of the way, we fly to gain it.  
And with shattered plumes and pain-cries fall we  
fainting !”

Sadly leaned he, with white face, against the lantern.  
Seemed he to grow weak—all strength seemed  
ebbing from him.

Blurred and blinded, ev’n with tears, became his  
vision.

“Never more,” he groaned, “on the loved face  
of Rhobe

Shall I look again, nor on the face of Albin !”

Then he hastened, and adown the spiral stairway,  
And adown the hill-slope, followed after Rhobe.

“Bright will burn the lantern,” said he, “till the  
morning.

And alone,” he cried, “by no strong arm attended,  
She can never launch the sloop the Little Ella!

“I will lend my aid!—and once on board the  
shallop

I alone will push from shore—and leave the  
maiden!”

So he downward sped with swift foot to the  
landing,—

But he found nor boat nor maiden. Only harshly  
In his face swept drops of bullet-like fierce sea-  
spray.

“Ah!” he said, “I might have known.—The tide  
has risen.—

And the maiden has not sailed upon these waters.  
Since she first could haul a sheet or hold a tiller,  
To be baffled in the launching of her shallop!  
Ev’n the mad waves she would make to do her  
bidding.”

Then he strained his eyes far out into the offing:  
Sail nor boat, nor maid nor lover, met his vision—  
Blackness only, and the rushing of the tempest,  
And the distant swirl and swash on the bare  
ledges.

And there was no other boat on all the island!

“I shall better see,” he thought, “from out the  
lantern.”

So he ran. But when again he gained the tower,—  
When high-perched he stood within his lofty  
eyrie,—

To look forth he dreaded. Yet the lurid lightning,  
Flashing still each moment, called him to the  
window.

As he stood there, gazing out into the blackness,  
On his burdened mind swept multitudes of  
visions,—

Of the days when he and Albin, boys together,  
On the neighboring beaches sported, or, in rude  
boats

Their own hands had fashioned, paddled on the  
river;

Of the happy days when, arm in arm, they  
wandered

To the busy shipyards sweet with pine and resin,  
On the river's western margin, and with buoyant  
Eager hearts sailed outward in imagination  
Over sun-lit seas and to far fragrant islands;

Of the later days, when Albin, seeking labor,  
Came to keep the lighthouse and to tend the  
beacon;

Of his confidence, still later, when of Rhobe  
He one day vouchsafed to speak, and trusted  
Walter

With the tidings of their mutual affection.

Then recalled he how one day upon the river,  
When the Little Ella sailed at early morning,  
In his fishing-schooner he had passed the maiden,  
And,—himself unseen,—had overheard her singing,  
And had caught these words, as on the air they  
floated:

“O my Albin! my beloved!”—these her words  
were.

“Thou my hope and star of promise for the future !

I indeed have gladly sailed upon the river,  
And have sailed ere yet there came the gleam  
of morning,  
To behold thy distant presence in the beacon !

“God be with thee in thy solitude, my Albin,  
And his angels from the breath of harm preserve  
thee !

Be thy voyage o'er life's sea a voyage holy ;  
Be thy guide the glorious rays of Bethlehem's  
starlight ;  
Be at last the eternal port of Heaven thy haven !

“And my Albin, if perchance thou now mightst  
hear me,  
List I pray thee to the prayer to Heaven I utter :  
That when finally may come to thee the sum-  
mons  
Which shall call thee to the land of the Here-  
after,  
Not alone thy feet may tread the verge eternal ! —

“Separated never, during life’s ascendant;  
Separated never, when the grave would part us!  
Arm in arm entwined, the when the Bridegroom  
calleth;  
Heart to heart enchain’d, in life’s fast final  
throbbings;  
Hand in hand tight held, nor ever more to sun-  
der!”

Standing leaning with pale face against the lantern,  
As upon his mind returned the maiden’s prayer,  
“O prophetic words! too soon fulfilled!” cried  
Walter.

Then again a flash lit up the wide-flung waters,  
And the fountains of the great deep seemed  
upbreaking.

One glimpse only, Walter caught, through all the  
darkness,  
Throughout all the terrible, drear hours till day-  
light,  
Of the sloop which had been called the Little  
Ella!

Mastless, water-logged, she seemed, and all but  
sinking,

And amid her shattered stays two forms seemed  
clinging.

—When the daylight came, and down the rocky  
terrace

Walter hastened to the shore to search the ledges,  
Scattered were the rocks and sands with wide-  
flung seaweed,

With old spars and timbers and huge piles of  
driftwood ;—

And a few short boat-lengths outward on the  
current,

On the sullen crest of the subsiding billows,  
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,  
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,  
Driven here and there, were fragments of the  
shallop—

Fragments only, of the sloop the Little Ella.

And a rod or two beyond the narrow landing,  
On the rocks up-tossed, and still together clinging,

With the seaweed in their hair and on their faces,  
And the sea-shell's pallid hue where crimson  
dulses  
Yesterday had blushed less ruddy, Walter found  
them.

---

Gone are many years, since on the rocky island  
At the edge of Ocean Albin kept the lighthouse;  
Gone are many years, since Rhobe on the river  
Sailed at early morning in the Little Ella;  
And the granite tower is lanternless and ruined.

Over the bald turret creeps the tender ivy,  
And around it cling the golden-rod and yarrow.  
But anigh the base of the old, crumbling ruin  
Rises proudly a more brilliant, powerful beacon:  
And the people call it ever, "Albin's lighthouse."

A few feet from the old tower there blossoms lowly,  
Hidden half by ivy, a green mound—one only.

Here they rest—the maiden Rhobe and her lover;  
Here in calm they lie, while vainly roars the  
Ocean;  
Here in peace repose they, steadfast, and forever.

Few of all the listless multitudes who daily  
Throng the busy steamers plying on the river,  
Know the tender story of the love of Rhobe;—  
Eyes with wonder lifted to behold the lantern  
As they pass beneath it, see not where she  
slumbers.

Loving hands, however, who her tale remember,  
And who know the valor of the death of Albin,  
Yearly twine green ivy o'er the graven tablet  
Which records the story of their true devotion,—  
Of their hopes in life, and of their death together.

And the chisel, on one side of the white tablet,  
Has engraved the legend, “Trebly better were it  
When calls Duty, sternest voice of God or Nature,  
Ev'n to perish, than to fail in the fulfilling!”  
And upon the other side is writ this stanza:

“Separated never, during life’s ascendant;  
Separated never, when the grave would part them!  
Arm in arm entwined, the when the Bridegroom  
    called them;  
Heart to heart enchainèd, in life’s fast final throb-  
    bings;  
Hand in hand tight held, nor ever more to sun-  
    der!”

.....Many are the sloops, and many are the  
    schooners,  
Which upon the widening current of the river  
Sail at early morning, sail at purple twilight,—  
Sloops and schooners filled with happy, smiling  
    faces;  
But among them never Rhobe sails, nor Albin:

Nor ever more upon the bosom of the river,  
On the surface of the Kennebec’s slow current,  
Slowly floating at the dawning of the morning,  
Slowly drifting with the shifting of the waters,  
Sails the jaunty little sloop, the Little Ella.

## THREE FRAGMENTS

## FROM AN UNFINISHED ALLEGORY.

## I. WALNUT HILL.

(Medford, near Boston, Massachusetts.)

A NOONTIDE sun, in early Summer-time;  
Low, billowy summits, in their verdant prime,  
Bounding a valley wide and fair and still:  
And in the midst, the slopes of Walnut Hill !

On all the northern hand,—far-reaching, gray,—  
The heights of Winchester, in rude array;  
And trending east, where lakes like sapphires burn,  
The Fells of Middlesex, embowered in fern.

Still east, the sea! a silvery line and thin,  
Hedged by the rocky heights of distant Lynn;  
And near at hand, slow-winding, placid, blue,—  
Along whose banks once Paul Revere flew,—

The Mystic's narrow tide—expanding soon  
Into a crystal mere, a broad lagoon,  
Reflecting far, from morn till evening hour,  
Gray Bunker's lofty, sun-illumined tower.

Southward, the city—dreary desert vast!...  
Haste thee, my verse! beware the woe! fly fast!...  
Far, far beyond, see Milton's purple hills,  
The blue-domed range which every bosom thrills;  
And nearer,—where the marbles hide from view  
The ashes of a Sumner and Ballou,—  
Fair Auburn! circled by a hundred farms,  
And clasped in sluggish Charles's sinuous arms.

Westward, the fertile fields of Alewife Brook,  
Laughing with harvests ripening for the hook,—  
Flecked by the shadows of vast clouds that float  
Aimless as shipwrecked sails on seas remote,—  
Edged by low mountains, shimmering in the sun,  
The emerald Heights, far-famed, of Arlington!  
Enchanted hills, which, when the day is past,  
Are tipt with glory such as Nebo cast  
When angels hastened o'er its darkening crest,  
Bearing the Hebrew prophet to his rest!

## II. HEART OF YOUTH.

NORTHWARD and eastward from this favored scene,—

This Walnut Hill, this college-crowned demesne,—  
Beyond the river flowing at its feet,  
Beyond the whirl of village pier and street,  
There winds a road through rarest sylvan ways,  
The ever new delight of summer days.

Here darkling thickets, densely green, abide,  
Hazel, and oak, and birch, on either side,—  
Where the brown partridge unseen whirrs, and  
where

Gray squirrels lurk, and rabbits have their lair.  
Here blooms the barberry, in yellow sprays,  
Miles long! and here, through all the summer days,  
The sweet wild rose and fragrant wilding phlox  
Vie with the garden pinks and hollyhocks  
Which shall be crowned the fairer! And the prize  
No single wanderer, passing with pleased eyes,  
Withholds from Nature's wilding ones, here strowed  
Luxuriantly.

.....Along this sunny road

Two friends were walking at the noon of day;  
And both were thoughtful, though they both were  
gay.

They both were thoughtful; but the summer air,  
The sunshine through the branches here and there,  
The laughing bobolink, the cawing crow,  
The blue above, the emerald below,  
Made life that hour so beautiful a dream,  
That rustling leaf nor onward murmuring stream  
Could less of sorrow feel, or wild despair,  
Than these companions idly wandering there.

For both were young! and in the soul of each  
Were aspirations deeper than all speech:  
Ambitions for the honor which the world  
Stands ready to inscribe on flags unfurled  
In noble causes;—aspirations, too,  
That honor granted should be honor due.

They dreamed of sacred fire withheld by Gods:  
They knew of Caucasus, and of the odds  
Prometheus wrestled with, and all his pain;  
And yet they dared it all, and more, again;  
And with the vultures' whirr still sounding nigh,  
They dared to rest their ladder on the sky.

Upon the shore of Time they would not sit.  
The Ocean was before! and they were knit  
Unto a firm resolve, by faith upheld  
To walk the waters! If they boiled and welled,  
The way would be more difficult; if calm,  
The port were sooner reached—the Isles of Palm.  
Nor did they hesitate to point their feet  
To where life's ocean and horizon meet.

They knew—yet were not daunted—wild with  
spray  
The vengeful tempest would assail their way.  
They knew men's bones lay bleaching in the  
sand;  
They saw the carcasses tossed high on land  
Of earnest voyagers who yesterday  
Had left the beach as buoyantly as they.  
But these (they said) had sailed without a chart:  
Or failed to use it: and the human heart,  
By passion ballasted, to escape the brine  
A special port must own, and chart divine.

III. “BY PASSION BALLASTED.”

WITH this they turned into a narrow lane,  
Half hidden in the leafy underbrush;  
A fragrant avenue, whose sacred hush  
Was broken by the rumble of no wheel,  
No whirl of dust, no echo but the peal  
Of sporting bobolinks; and where the moss  
A soft rich tapestry spread wide across;  
And all along, as far as eye could reach,  
The birch and hazel boughs and silver beech  
Threw grateful shade.

“This winding road,” said one,  
“Will guide us to the mountain-top. The sun,  
Which hitherto hath flamed upon our way  
With furious heat, will here its fury stay,  
And cooling breezes now will fan our cheek.  
The road is sure. I heard my father speak  
But yesterday of climbing this same path.”

The other lingered. “Greater beauty hath  
The wilding thicket for my mood,” said he.

“Behold ! a rod beyond this sumach-tree  
Sharply the mountain’s base begins to rise.  
Why toil we on ! ‘Reward of high emprise’  
Is here at hand ! Behold ! the forest floor  
Is thick with violets ! And here a door  
Between the maple-trunks seems opening wide,  
Inviting us to enter. In !” he cried,  
And caught his comrade’s arm, and sought  
To lure him.

But his zeal availed him naught.

“One moment, brother mine !” his comrade said.  
“We started out, the mountain’s highest head  
Intent to reach. Shall we be baffled here,  
By violets ? And yonder buds, I fear,  
Are not the violets your haste has thought.  
Those purple petals, delicately wrought,  
With subtle odor, poisonous, are filled.  
The deadly nightshade, if your eyes were skilled,  
You would declare them ! And your open door  
Is barred with stone and briar. The forest floor  
To which with sudden frenzy you would haste,  
Look you, is marshy ground—a miry waste.”

“Enough!” perversely here the other cried.  
“Give over! Get you up the mountain-side!  
Keep to your mossy pathway if you will—  
The roughest road is soonest up the hill!  
I shall stop here awhile, among the flowers,  
And rest beneath the trees. In after hours  
I’ll join you on the mountain’s topmost height.  
I know not how I shall ascend, but night  
Will not have fallen ere I join you. Go!”

He waited not for answer: but the low  
And sympathetic voice which oft had held  
Him humbled with its music, rose and swelled,  
And broke upon his ear in sweetest tone  
Of friendship, begging, “Leave me not alone!”  
In notes of warning, crying, “Do not go!”

He waited not for answer: but the low  
Wind murmured in his ear, and seemed to say:  
“T’were better, better, thoughtless youth, to stay!  
To stay were better!” And as on he passed,  
Still heedless,—with a deeper, warning blast,  
“The way is long!” it sighed, “and short the  
day!”—

It shouted! and the woodland echoed, “Stay!”

He waited not for answer: but a brood  
Of white-winged doves flew over where he stood,  
Seeming to whisper, as they wung their way  
On rapid pinion heavenward, "Stay, O stay!"

He waited not for answer—in he strode,  
At once his friend forsaking, and the road.  
Mindless of all—of pain or torn attire—  
He leaped the wall and scrambled through the  
briar.

His soul was innocent of thought of ill;  
His heart, untried, was buoyant; and his will  
Was steadfast (so he thought) to do the right.  
What matter where he wandered, if the night  
Should not have fallen ere he gained the peak!

But surely, so it seemed, across his cheek,  
The winds, which kissed him in the sun-lit way  
Where he before had wandered—which in play  
Had sported with his hair and fanned his brow—  
Were blowing searchingly and damply now.  
And when he looked, and saw upon his hand  
A score of crimson drops—a purple brand

The briars had punctured; when he felt the pain,  
At first forgot, now doubly felt again;  
And looking down beheld the dust, the burrs,  
Thick fastened on him—shaken from the furze:  
Backward he cast a lingering glance, and stood  
As one irresolute. The ground was strewed  
With stubble, broken stones, with last year's leaves:  
A prospect desolate. As one who grieves  
For pleasures vanished, and would fain return,  
So stood he now, and felt his pulses burn  
With shame that he had wandered from the way.  
Again he heard the wind! It seemed to say,  
“Repent! return! ye have not wandered far!”  
Above his head, from out his golden car,  
The Sun, Apollo, threw a quickening beam.  
Back flew the irised host of doves, agleam  
In every pinion with a golden glow;  
And circling in the air, above, below,  
“Ye have not wandered far!” they seemed to  
cry,—  
“Repent! return!”—then vanished in the sky.  
Again he heard a voice—or seemed to hear.  
Or voice or echo, sounding in his ear

It startled him, as if before his eye  
His friend deserted had come suddenly.

He listened,—turned,—had fled the dull abode,  
And in a moment would have gained the road,—  
When yonder field again his eye besets,  
The purple field—to him still violets!

“I will not go,” he cried,—and on his knees  
Down flung himself,—“till I have gathered these!”

A stagnant stream was there. It did not flow,  
But moved to right or left as wind might blow;  
And on its surface curling leaves careered  
And severed lily-pads. Dim, withered, weird,  
A ghostly cypress-tree and meadow-larch  
Above the margin reared a rugged arch,  
Throwing a slanting shadow on the rank  
Wet deadly nightshade growing on the bank.

And here the seeker after purple flowers  
Knelt fondly down to while away the hours.

## THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DREAM.

WEARY with toil, at desk and board and book,  
Gladly he dropped the crayon in its nook;  
But forcing to his lips a kindly smile,  
And touching with soft hand his bell the while,  
Said cheerfully, "The hour to close is nigh:  
The setting sun drops down the western sky.  
To-morrow, with new ease, will come new strength;  
We reach, perchance, untiring days at length!"  
Then rang again, and noting the sweet grace  
And eagerness that lit each fair young face,  
Dismissed them all into the evening air  
With fervent blessing and an inward prayer.

The master's soul was sorrowful with doubt—  
He whose triumphant faith should be so stout.  
His pupils were so sluggish in the arts!  
They had such feverish and impatient hearts!  
"O soul!" he said, "thy toil meets no return.  
Life's cheeriest fires to blackened embers burn.

No adequate return," again he said,  
And on the desk before him leaned his head.  
The western windows opened to the blue;  
The sinking sun sent slanting shadows through:  
He saw it not, nor heard the droning flies,—  
But lulled by Nature's opiate, closed his eyes.

He sees nor hears—his soul's tired pinions sweep  
The shadowy vale of Death's twin-brother, Sleep.  
All day, sad voices, sounding in his ear,  
Had filled his spirit with a nameless fear.  
Surely no followers, in this sunless land,  
Would jeer and beckon him on every hand!  
But ah! ev'n here,—though with no taunt or  
shout,—  
A myriad spirits thronged him round about;  
And with a soothing sound, as of a wind  
Low-breathing through the fragrant groves of Ind,  
A single angel—not of gloom, but light—  
Said tenderly, "O King, thy wrongs recite!"

"Alas!" the master said, "no King am I!—  
Even the crown of laurel-leaves is dry

Which in my younger years my sister wove,  
Because at college, among all who strove,  
I, only, won, and bore away the prize!"  
"Nay," said the angel, "principalities,  
States, empires, kingdoms,—these all pass away,  
Forgotten even in an earthly day.

The crown immortal, the enduring throne,—  
These to be steadfast must be like thine own!  
He who the Light to one dark soul shall bring,  
Among the sons of men is more than King.

"No word thou utterest, or good or ill,  
But sounds forever,—wild or soft or shrill,—  
Fast held within the vibrant air's embrace.  
If words of thine shall brighten one sad face,  
Thine accents ease a brother's heavy load,  
Thy daily task reveal where Truth is strowed,  
Then rest content! for there shall come a year  
(And soon shall come) when back into thine ear  
With ten-fold power thy words, or ill or good,  
Shall speed with force that may not be withstood.  
Then happy thou, if in thine ear shall ring  
Words that shall crown thee servant,—helper,—  
king!"

The master smiled—his face with peace was lit  
Where lately pain had overshadowed it.  
“But, sympathy!” he cried. “Sweet spirit, stay!  
Fain would I have some token by the way.  
Daily I toil, nor meet a single smile  
To ease the burden of one lonely mile!”  
“Awake!” the angel answered,—“thou art blind.”  
He raised his head. “Please, sir, we stayed  
behind,—  
You fell asleep,—you would not wake for us!”  
(Two little-ones beside his knee spoke thus.)  
“You love us, and try hard,—we know you do;  
And we have brought this little flower for you!”



WENTWORTH BROOKS ROBBINS.

*IN MEMORIAM.*

I.

WITH hearts enchain'd, and grateful, keen de-light,

We gazed into the mid-September sky ;—  
A new star, then un-named, intense and bright,  
Rising, had met our eye !

Nightly we watched the fair, ascending orb,

More beautiful, more luminous each hour.

Never did other sun our souls absorb  
With more supernal power.

Six fleeting months it gleamed—until its rise

Was looked for, and we grew to love its  
beams.

And then,—as suddenly as the swift lightning flies,  
As break the mountain streams,—

There loomed a cloud above the horizon's bar,  
Which, while we groaning gazed into the Night,  
Enshrouded all the scene, and hid the star  
Forever from our sight.

And hid the star!—yea, hid!—but quenched it  
not!

Beyond our sharpest doubt, beyond our fear,  
The star, with radiance transcending thought,  
Shall sometime reappear.

And even now, though hidden from our sight,  
Behind the clouds it in full beauty glows,  
Gleaming with fadeless, more resplendent light  
Than when it first arose.

II.

UPON the surface only, wild with glee,  
The white waves dance with all the winds that  
blow:  
They only learn the secrets of the sea  
Who fathom far below.

To those who knew him least, he might have seemed—

That comrade whom with many tears we mourn—  
Like one who lived for sport; who never dreamed  
He for aught else was born.

Ye never knew him as ye should have known,  
Ye who would judge him with a judgment  
thus!

A tenderer heart throbbed never, than his own,  
Nor more magnanimous.

And not in vain he lived, though brief his day:  
His blithesome heart oft stole away our care;  
Long in our lives his influence will stay,  
Blessing us unaware.

III.

THE April morning wore a cloudy vail;  
Across the mountain-tops gray vapors passed;—  
Weeping for him who prostrate lay and pale  
The sleet and rain fell fast.

But with the noon the sky no longer grieved;  
The sun-lit earth grew luminous and bright.  
Even the up-heaved sod—for *him* up-heaved—  
Grew golden in the light.

With slow sad steps we bore him to the grave  
While on his pall the flowers and smilax lay,—  
And wept we that a soul like his should have  
No longer life than they.

But beautiful it was, if he must die,  
To reach his rest in such a time and scene,—  
Mourned by such tender love, and brought to lie  
Beneath such sky serene.

And there we left him—where he oft had roved  
To greet at morn each mountain's purple  
dome;—  
In constant sight of the dear hills he loved,  
His happy summer home.\*

—*Tuftsonian.*

\* See Note at end of volume.

“IF I WERE A STREAM ON A  
MOUNTAIN.”

[WHAT GRANDFATHER SAID TO THE BOYS.]

IF I were a stream on a mountain, I'd be  
The merriest stream in the whole wide world.  
I would laugh through the wood, and would run  
o'er the lea,  
And would haste to the far-off, billowy sea,—  
To the white-sailed ships with their wings  
unfurled;  
And there, though my waves into foam were  
hurled,  
I would still be the merriest stream in the  
world.

If I were a rainbow, I'd strive to be  
The fairest one ever wide-hung in the sky.  
If tempest and clouds should roll over me,  
With my own glad, radiant beauty, in glee,  
To invest them with color and glory I'd try;—

And if 'neath their gloom I must die, I would  
die!

But still as the rosiest bow in the sky.

If I were a juniper-tree, I would be  
The greenest and shadiest tree in the earth.  
Expanding my cone-covered foliage free,  
I would laugh in delight and make jubilee  
At the odors balsamic to which I gave birth;—  
And if I must fade in the Fall and the dearth,  
I would fade as the juniper greenest on earth.

If I were a boy again, I would be  
The merriest, happiest boy in the land.  
The sun would shine warm, flowers bloom for  
me,—  
And I, with an answering beauty and glee,  
Would lend to the helpless a helping hand,—  
On the hill-top of Service would take my stand,  
The most sympathetic boy in the land.



### DEATH OF MY FRIEND.

WHAT! is that good Year dying?—  
The Year that has done so much for me?  
That so often has had a kind touch for me?

Out in the cold there, dying?—  
Poor Year! what a sorrowful end for thee!  
Thou that hast been such a friend to me!

And is never a mourner wailing?—  
Is the whole wide hemisphere rollicking?  
The world with a foundling frolicking?

Old Year, there surely is wailing!—  
*My* heart in deep sympathy bleeds for thee!  
My tongue this sad requiem reads for thee!

December 31, 1878.

“I FAIN WOULD BOW BEFORE  
THE LORD.”

[Thoughts of an unwilling doubter, on reading the dispatches announcing the scenes of horror at the late destruction of towns by earthquakes in Central America.]

I fain would bow before the Lord—  
I grasp him not—he reigns afar;  
He hides within the mountain scar;  
The lightning is his gleaming sword.

I fain would take his hand in mine—  
He glows amid the stars of Night.  
I see his wisdom and his might—  
He needeth Love to be divine!

I find him in the trees and rocks;  
The Universe proclaims a God.  
But is it tenderness—the rod  
That calls to life the earthquake’s shocks?

At morn a man to worship goes:  
The preacher tells him "God is Good."  
At noon a populous neighborhood  
Is swallowed in earth's central throes.

And what of all the shame, the wrong,  
The want, the crime that stalks abroad!...  
Still rant ye of the love of God?—  
Then groaning cry I, "Lord, how long!"

What care hath He for mortal men!  
We are but beetles in his sight.  
We mouth about the wrong, the right—  
He laughs! We fade to earth again.

O Love Divine! enlarge my Faith!  
Confusions, these, of finite thought!  
Aid me to judge thee as I ought,  
Nor longer hug this mocking wraith.



## WORDS AND DEEDS.

WORDS ! ah, words ! 'Tis easy writing  
Of the ardor men should feel :  
But 'tis harder, Paris, smiting  
Armed Achilles in the heel.

---

## THE SORROWING WIND.

I SAT awaiting one who did not come.  
Against my window the October rain  
Pattered a weird and pitiful refrain—  
Never dear Mother Nature's voice is dumb.  
Drearly, as in penitence, the wind  
Murmured a Miserere—had it sinned?  
Had it been boisterous upon the deep?  
Had it been cruel—tossing ships about,  
And sending sailors to their watery sleep?—  
With aimless fury and disastrous rout  
Had it been leveling dim forest aisles,  
And devastating fields for miles and miles?

## DRIFTING.

I AM drifting, I am drifting  
On a shifting, shifting sea ;  
And above me clouds are lifting—purple, rosy  
clouds are lifting  
Wide their ægis over me :  
And between each shattered rifting,  
And between each floss and fold,  
Downward on my passage Phœbus—radiant Phœ-  
bus—glistens, sifting  
Iris hues and gold.

Stately islands, stately islands  
Rise beside me and before ;  
And amid their vernal highlands—from amid their  
shadowy highlands  
Voices lure me to the shore :  
For as in the swampy Nile-lands  
Ghosts of priests of Isis dance,  
So amid these vernal islands—here amid these  
shadowy highlands  
Fairy Ariels prance.

They are calling, they are calling  
To the silvery, sandy beach !  
Where delicious fruits are falling—ripened from  
the trees are falling—  
Pear, pomegranate, peach !  
Fruits of Eden, never palling  
On the taste or to the eyes ;  
Purple grapes and figs, forestalling—in their lus-  
cious tints forestalling  
Dreams of Paradise !

I am weary—I am weary  
Of the tugging of the oar !  
And behind me, dull and dreary—wide and wild,  
and dull and dreary,  
Swells the swelling ocean floor.  
And I gladly, oh, I gladly  
Turn my shallop to the shore,  
Where the murmuring waves shall madly—where  
the mocking waves shall madly  
Beat and buffet me no more.

We are drifting, we are drifting  
On the shifting sea of life :

And above us clouds are lifting—dark and ominous clouds are lifting,

Dim with turmoil and with strife.

Dim with turmoil—bright with blessing !

Storm and sunshine intermixed !

Ever, through earth's doubts distressing, heaven's persuasive lights are pressing,

On the headland ages fixed !

There are voices, calling, calling ;

And they beckon us away ;

And amid the dim, appalling, fear-inspiring darkness falling,

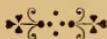
We can seem to see the Day !.....

O ye Voices ! heavenly Voices,

Speaking to me,—saying “Write ! ”

May the message that rejoices far outweigh all other choices !

Bid my pen be dipt in light !



## EARLY FRAGMENT.

1870.

NOT greatly distant from the sounding sea  
Beside whose edge I frequent wend my way,  
An ancient forest, deep and silent, lies,—  
Reputed home of nymph and woodland fay.  
Verdant primeval arches rise o'erhead,  
And hide the earth from sunlight and the sky ;  
And drooping mosses hang from every limb—  
Gauze-curtains, swaying in the East-wind's sigh.

The hemlock and the pine are brothers here ;  
Their branches they in mutual friendship wield ;  
And when the winter blasts and snows appear,  
Each strives the other from the storms to shield.  
Oh, would that men might here a lesson learn,  
And all, as one, their strength and faith compare :  
That when were nigh the fitful storms of life,  
The strong the burdens of the weak might bear.

EPILOGUE—“FINISHED.”

THE year is finished—finished is the book.  
The year was full of days, for good or ill:  
With us it lay the fleeting hours to fill  
With noble deeds. Long hours in dale and  
nook,  
Where haunted pines their odorous needles shook,  
Where fern and flower their dewy fragrance  
spill,  
It gave for our delight. 'Tis dying! Still,  
New years remain! With fervor let us look  
To make them really ours.—And thou, my page!  
As years with days, so thou with words art  
full!  
Oh, happy I, if on thy friendly way  
Some thought of cheer thou give, to youth or  
age,  
Some life encrimsoned make as white as wool,  
Some sorrowing heart allure to dream of day!

December, 1880.

## LINES.

## THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT.

THE clay my fingers yearned to mould,  
And modeled as they slowly could,  
I find 'becoming hard and cold—  
Retaining with the strength of wood  
The vines artistically scrolled,  
The sculptured ferns and marigold—  
And having, it is understood,  
Of permanence a likelihood.  
It may be that another year  
Will prove the Age of Marble near.

## NOTES.

### *Dedication.*

These lines, together with the *Proem* to the present volume, were written in 1875, when the author meditated printing a small volume of his earlier verses—a project which was abandoned.

### Page 72. *The Bells of Como.*

Pondering some verses appropriate to the Anniversary of the Society for which this narrative was written, the legend here presented was recalled and made use of. The barest suggestion only, of the story, was possessed by me, and the entire history of Michael, including the itinerary of his wanderings as here given, is my own. Since the poem was first printed (soon after its delivery), I have learned that the story has before met versification; but, on account of the inherent beauty and poetic possibilities of the legend, this fact was anticipated by me. I would be glad to meet with the other verses.

### Page 123. *Kalligo* (pronounced with the accent on the first syllable).

The appended Note was prefixed to this poem on its original publication in 1881 —

The greater part of the following poem was written a number of years ago. Since that time—owing to other engagements, mercantile and literary, on the part of the writer—it has remained unfinished. Friends who saw the earlier sheets, and who at frequent intervals have evinced a desire for the story in full, have now urged to its completion.

The early date of the composition (when the writer was not twenty years old) will perhaps explain, though it will not excuse, any possible imperfections in the design of the poem and the mechanism of the verses.

A word of comment concerning the facts presented: That he has not overdrawn, in his verses, the social and spiritual needs of a large class of people occupying the southern coastline States of this country,—Florida not only, but the States along the entire Mexican gulf to the extremity of Louisiana,—the writer is confident all observing travelers will admit. Scattered as these people are through vast territories of swamp and forest; living oftentimes for years in solitude; visited by the outside world only by accident, or through the promptings to adventure and travel which urge tourists to their marvelous landscapes; uneducated, uninformed, destitute entirely of refining influences,—it cannot be that in the simple, innocent,

NOTES.

unpolished prayer of the Cracker the writer has overdrawn facts, or that in any part of the story which he has weaved to accompany his scenic descriptions, he has exceeded the license of fiction—except, it may be, as Truth itself is said often to exceed the daring of the imagination.

If what he has written shall perhaps at any time inspire to personal or missionary endeavor in behalf of the numbers of whom he has spoken, he will not have written in vain. And if the descriptions contained in the poem shall warm the hearts of his untraveled readers to a conception of the marvels of Floridan landscapes, as the writer's study in preparing for his task, and his frequent scenic plagiarism in carrying out the same, have warmed his own, he will be a second time gratified.

And so he leaves the poem with his friends, and bids them "Merry Christmas."

COLLEGE HILL, Christmas, 1881.

Page 154. "*These perfect days were never meant  
For toil of hand or brain.*"

For these two lines, which have long sounded in my memory, I am indebted to a very pleasing mid-summer poem, entitled "Lotus Eating," met by me some years ago in the columns of the local press.

Page 155. "*The world is too much with us.*"

See Wordsworth's famous Sonnet, thus beginning.

Page 235. *Wentworth Brooks Robbins.*

Mr. Robbins, a student at Tufts College, was a young man of unusual social qualities, and endeared to all who knew him. He died at the early age of nineteen. Educated in boyhood in New York City, he partook of the bustle and excitement incident to society in the metropolis; but spending for many years his Summers in Keene, N. H., his nature was rounded and intensified by the beauty of the sky and the mountains: and although he did not manifest it openly, nor often even to those who entered deepest into his life, his spirit was calmed and glorified by a love for Nature and a belief in the Eternal wisdom and goodness. By the hands of his college friends, who had loved him in life, and who in death followed him with tears, he was laid to rest in a beautiful spot shut in by his own New Hampshire hills.











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